University of Alberta

The Impact of Rhetoric and Education on the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus

by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to explore and underline the impact of education and rhetoric on the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus. I will examine the concept of education in two different aspects. First, I will determine the role of education in regards to Ammianus' early life by describing the cultural climate in the East in the fourth century (Introduction and chapter 1). In this analysis, I will argue that the historian's familiarity with Latin suggests an early acquaintance with the language, indicating that he should not be invariably associated with earlier Greek historians. Second, I will look at how the content of the curriculum is reflected in the *RG*, explaining how literary sources shaped the composition of the historian's digressions on geography (Chapter 3) and astronomy (Chapter 4). In the past, scholars have examined Ammianus' cultural digressions as an example of the tension between things seen and things read. In my argumentation, I will concentrate on explaining the reasons why Ammianus often tended to rely on literary works rather than observation. I will show that the explanation greatly lies in the content of the curriculum.

Concerning the role of rhetoric, I will examine how rhetorical training is articulated in the *RG*. In Chapter 2, I will show that Ammianus' selection of historical material can be explained in light of the ancient theory of styles. In this context, I will study the role of a rhetorical device designed to raise the emotions of readers by bringing the scene before their eyes: *enargeia.* In Chapters 3 and 4, I will demonstrate that the cultural digressions in the *RG* are mostly the product of cultural stereotypes and literary influences. In Chapter 5, I will show the impact of rhetorical treatises on some passages

of the *RG*, arguing that the traditional classification of oratory into deliberative, epideictic and judicial is echoed in both the speeches and the historical narrative.

To conclude: the main purpose of my dissertation is to show how certain intellectual mechanisms learnt at school are manifested in the text of the *RG*.

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PREFACE

Ammianus Marcellinus, Roman historian and military man of the fourth century, wrote the *Res Gestae* (*RG*), a history of the Roman Empire, in Latin, in 31 books, of which only 18 are extant (14-31). Ammianus saw himself as continuing the historical work of Tacitus; the lost 13 books were a summary covering two and half centuries from Nerva's accession in 96 (31.6.9) to the middle of the fourth century;[1] the existing 18 books cover a period of 25 years, from 353, the seventeenth year of the reign of Costantius II, to the battle of Adrianople and death of Valens in 378.

The content of the *RG* reveals important information about Ammianus' life, particularly since the historian actively participated in many of the events he described. Ammianus was originally from the East and joined the Roman army as a *protector domesticus* (16.10.21). The first time Ammianus appears in the *RG* as a *protector domesticus* he is under Ursicinus' command in Nisibis, Mesopotamia, in 354 (14.9.1). Ammianus served his commander for the following 7 years. He accompanied him to Antioch, where the Caesar Gallus had required the latter to preside over the treason trials of 354 (14.9.1-9). In the same year, Ursicinus departed hastily to Milan. Constantius had decided to execute Gallus and, according to Ammianus, it was not safe to leave Ursicinus alone in the East (14.11.2-5). Ursicinus' next mission was to suppress Silvanus' revolt, a Frank who had declared himself emperor in Cologne in 355 (15.5.1-38). Ammianus was directly involved in the conspiracy to assassinate Silvanus, although he did not take part

[1] However, the *RG* was never intended to be an imitation of Tacitus's works. See L. E. Wilshire, "Did Ammianus Marcellinus Write a Continuation of Tacitus?" *Classical Journal* 68, no. 3 (1973): 221-27. R. C. Blockley, "Tacitean Influence upon Ammianus Marcellinus," *Latomus* 32 (1973): 63-78.

in the murder itself (15.5.30). The trip from Milan to Cologne and his later stay at Gaul are described in several digressions (15.9.1-8; 10.1-11; 11.1-18; 12.1-6.). This is also where Ammianus first saw the young Caesar Julian at Rheims in the summer of 356 (16.2.8-9). In 357, Ursicinus was summoned to the court at Sirmium to discuss the strategy against the Persians. Ursicinus recovered the command of the East, and Ammianus was made his personal aide (16.10.21). Because of a sudden change of policy, Ursicinus was recalled from Samosata just before the Persians started advancing in the spring of 359. As Ursicinus and his officers arrived at the river Hebrus in Thracia, they were recalled to Mesopotamia to stop the Persian attack. Ursicinus was then serving under the command of Sabinianus (18.6.1-7). After crossing the frontier, they proceeded to Nisibis to prepare its defence. Subsequently, they left the city and, after numerous difficulties, arrived at Amida (18.6.1-7). Ammianus was sent on an espionage mission consisting of interrogating the ally of Rome Jovinianus, satrap of Corduene, about the enemy's plans and position (18.6.20-23). The Persian campaign ended with the siege and destruction of Amida by the Persian king Sapor. Ammianus escaped on foot along with two soldiers and, finally, returned to Antioch (19.1-8). In 363, he joined Julian's Persian expedition at Cercusium (23.5.7; 6.30). In the same year, he returned to Antioch as part of the defeated army under Jovian's command (25.10.1). After this date, it is difficult to describe Ammianus' activities with any detail. In 371, he was at Antioch during the trials for treason and practice of magic arts (29.1.24). We know that he extensively travelled between 363 and the year of his arrival in Rome. The trips covered large areas in Greece (26.10.19), Egypt (17.4.6; 22.15.1), the coasts of Thrace and the Black Sea (22.8.1; 27.4.2), and the Balkans (31.7.16). Some indirect allusions show that Ammianus was at

Rome at the beginning of the 380s. In one of the digressions on the city of Rome, the historian refers to the experience of the visitor who will be disappointed by the habits and vices of the aristocracy (14.6.2; 12). In this passage, he also hints that he himself was among the foreigners expelled during the food shortage of 384 (14.6.19).

Nevertheless, the presence of substantial biographical material in the *RG* does not necessarily mean that Ammianus is always accurate in representing historical events. Scholars have already identified numerous passages that contain discrepancies between his account and historical reality, and have tried to identify the rationale behind Ammianus' lack of historical objectivity. Since the number of historiographical studies of this type has considerably increased in the last decades, I will not attempt to give an exhaustive list of them now.[2] Instead, I will immediately explain the subject of this thesis, and refer to the relevant scholarly contributions as I discuss Ammianus' life and work in the subsequent chapters.

My dissertation intends to explore the impact of education and rhetoric on the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus. I will examine the concept of education in two different aspects. First, I will determine the role of education in regards to Ammianus' early life by describing the educational and cultural environment in the East (Introduction). In this analysis, I will deal with topics such as the content of the curriculum, the increasing relevance of Latin as a second language, the controversy on

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[2] For a comprehensive examination of the bibliography on Ammianus until 1982, see Klaus Rosen, *Ammianus Marcellinus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982). E. A. Thompson first identified Ammianus' biased account in *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947). For a more detailed study, see T. G. Elliot, *Ammianus Marcellinus and Fourth Century History* (Sarasota, Fla.: S. Stevens, 1983). Other important historiographical works are: Guy Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin: Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les "Res Gestae"* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1978); John Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London: Duckworth, 1989); Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).

the idea of education, and the writing of history in the fourth century. Indeed, the identification of Ammianus' historical models will help us understand the content, and impact, of the curriculum on the *RG*. Eventually, I will be applying this general cultural framework in my analysis of specific aspects of the life and career of the historian (chapter 1). Second, I will examine how the content of the traditional curriculum is reflected in the *RG*. More specifically, I will explain how the literary component of the curriculum shaped the composition of the historian's digressions on geography (Chapter 3) and astronomy (Chapter 4). Recently, scholars have examined Ammianus' cultural digressions as an example of the tension between things seen and things read (*visa vel lecta*).[3] These studies also place the digressions within the debate about Ammianus' distortion of historical reality. In my argumentation, I will concentrate on explaining the reasons why Ammianus tended to rely on literary sources rather than observations. I will show that the explanation greatly lies in the content of the curriculum.

Concerning the role of rhetoric in Ammianus' narrative, I will explore ways in which the traditional rhetorical training is articulated in the *RG*. In Chapter 2, I will show that Ammianus' distortion of historical reality can also be explained in light of the ancient theory of styles. In this context, I will study the role of a rhetorical device designed to raise the emotions of readers by bringing the scene before their eyes: ἐνάργεια. In Chapters 3 and 4, I will demonstrate that the cultural digressions in the *RG* are mostly the product of cultural stereotypes and literary influences. In Chapter 5, I will show the impact of rhetorical treatises on some passages of the *RG*. In this chapter, I will also show that the traditional classification of oratory into deliberative, epideictic and judicial is echoed in both the speeches and the narrative. Additionally, I will emphasize

[3] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 95-106.

that the role of education and rhetoric in the *RG* is also conceived in the context of the fourth century. My examination will attempt to include both the permanent aspects implied in the tradition of education and the changes that new cultural and social circumstances have effected in that tradition.

To some it may seem odd to establish a close link between a rhetorical education and a historical work. One may reasonably argue that the influence of literature and the historical environment itself might have exercised a more definitive influence on the final work. To choose a modern literary example, one which is somehow parallel to the bilingual experience of Ammianus, it is unlikely that anybody would look at what Conrad studied at school when analyzing the content and structure of his novels. It is therefore not usual that scholars establish a connection between the content of formal education and a literary or historical work, unless there is a powerful reason to do so, as for example it happens with the impact of Jesuit education on Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Nevertheless, our view must dramatically change as we approach ancient literary works. In his foreword to the English edition of H. Lausberg's *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, G. A. Kennedy perfectly summarizes the relevance of rhetoric in the literature of antiquity. His words give a perfect justification to my methodological approach:

> Great literature is never a mechanical application of rules, but at least until the Romantic Period the artistry of literary composition was often thought of as the creative imitation, emulation, and variation of treatment within the conventions of each genre. Classical rhetoric, and its medieval and renaissance restatements, provides the modern critic with a detailed structure and

terminology to describe this art and an entré into how writers and readers of the past regarded language use.[4]

Justification is also evident in view of previous scholarship published on Ammianus. There are three monographs directly dealing with the presence of rhetorical language in the *RG*. Rosen examines the *RG* as a literary work in "Studien zur Darstellungskunst und Glaubwürdigkeit des Ammianus Marcellinus" (1968).[5] In this work, Rosen argues how literary embellishment often obscures historical reliability, emphasizing the manner Ammianus arranged the chapters and books in order to highlight literary pathos. In *Ammianus Marcellinus: A Study of his Historiography and Political Thought* (1975), Blockley gives an exhaustive accounting of how Ammianus uses rhetoric as a linguistic device to display political thought and examples of ethical behaviour.[6] In *Ammianus Marcellinus: Seven Studies in His Language and His Thought* (1986), Seager displays an exhaustive catalogue describing the historian's powerful use of language to depict virtues and vices in the context of imperial rule.[7] However, none of these studies attempts to establish links between the educational background and the use of rhetorical language in the *RG*. Rather, they focus on how Ammianus tries to influence the reader by using literary embellishment as well as lessons in politics and ethics. Conversely, one of the main purposes of my thesis is, overall, to show how certain intellectual mechanisms learnt at school are manifested in the text of the *RG*.

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[4] George Alexander Kennedy, foreword to *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, by H. Lausberg (Leiden: Brill, 1998), xix.

[5] Klaus Rosen, "Studien zur Darstellungskunst und Glaubwürdigkeit des Ammianus Marcellinus," (Ph. D. diss., Heidelberg, 1968).

[6] R. C. Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus: A Study of His Historiography and Political Thought* (Brussels: Latomus, 1975). See also by the same author "Ammianus Marcellinus' Use of Exempla," *Florilegium* 13 (1994): 53-64.

[7] R. Seager, *Ammianus Marcellinus: Seven Studies in His Language and Thought* (Columbia, Miss.: University of Missouri Press, 1986).

Note: References to the *Res Gestae* are given as numbers in parenthesis in the main text of the dissertation. Quotations and translations from Ammianus' work are from the edition by J. C. Rolfe. The title of Ammianus' history is given in the abbreviated form, *RG*. For the numeration of the *Panegyrici Latini*, I use the one used by Mynors.

INTRODUCTION: THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL CLIMATE IN THE EAST IN THE FOURTH CENTURY A. D.

In this introductory chapter, I intend to examine the educational curriculum and cultural climate prevailing in the East during the fourth century. My study will offer an overview of the educational experience of several Greek writers who were contemporaries, or almost contemporaries, of Ammianus Marcellinus. I will be referring to authors such as Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil of Caesarea, Libanius, and John Chrysostom. Since Ammianus chose to write his history in Latin, and, as I will argue in Chapter 1, there are strong reasons to believe that the historian undertook some sort of Latin instruction before joining the army, it is appropriate to refer also to the educational experience of contemporary Latin writers like Augustine, Claudian and Jerome. Overall, this examination will provide a framework to assist us in the reconstruction of Ammianus' own educational experience (see next chapter). Put in a different way: the identification of certain patterns will help us to argue whether Ammianus was a typical product of his age.

The study of Ammianus' curriculum has also further implications in our understanding of specific aspects of the *RG* such as its language, religious and philosophical content and, overall, its place within the tradition of Graeco-Roman historiography. It seems odd that scholars had not examined whether a systematic study of the educational climate of the fourth century could shed a light on some controversial issues concerning the form and thought of Ammianus' historical narrative (see Chapter 1).

The language of the *RG* has often been judged according to the stylistic standards set by previous Latin historians such as Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus. This approach is not appropriate, considering that these are not the only authors that had an impact on the work of Ammianus. Conversely, more satisfactory results are obtained if we also examine the language of the *RG* in the light of the aesthetic trends of the fourth century and, particularly, if we take into account the role of bilingualism in shaping new cultural expectations.[1] For instance, prosopographical evidence reveals that many Greek authors wrote literary works in Latin, a new cultural phenomenon if compared to the traditional reluctance of Greek intellectuals to learn the Latin language. Ammianus' choice to compose a history of the Roman Empire in Latin should be understood within this particular context.

As regards the religious and philosophical content of the *RG*, scholars have already analysed certain passages that reveal Ammianus' attitude towards Christianity as well as the historian's knowledge of contemporary philosophical thought. In my study, I propose to explore the role of the educational environment in generating the type of debate we occasionally detect in the narrative of the *RG*. We should not neglect the fact that much of the intellectual discussion through the fourth and subsequent centuries dealt with the content, purpose and impact of the traditional curriculum. Julian was perhaps the most jealous defender of the values attributed to the Greek cultural heritage, issuing a law that removed Christian teachers from the schools. Libanius, in his speeches and letters, often presented the cultural and moral values of Hellenism as being threatened by both the Christian creed and the popularity of Latin studies. Conversely, from a Christian

[1] To take a comparison, Procopius undoubtedly imitates the styles of Thucydides and Herodotus, but that is not to say that he cannot also be profitably compared with other authors of the sixth century.

perspective, the content of the Graeco-Roman curriculum posed an obvious theological problem: why should one study a literature where myths and legends often played a pervasive role? Responses to this question ranged from ambiguity to extremism. While some Christian orators condemned the content of Greek literature in their popular sermons, they also understood the value of Greek rhetoric in the composition of a theological argument, ultimately choosing what some pagan critics like Libanius and Julian utterly feared: a new form of Hellenism deprived of the substance and form of the traditional Greek religion. According to these pagan authors, therefore, one could only quote Plato or Homer as exclusively literary figures. Others, nevertheless, avoided the dilemma altogether and, rejecting the worthiness of the traditional curriculum, opted for the ascetic life. It is against this background I have briefly described here that I intend to examine Ammianus' references to Christianity and philosophical thought (chapter 1).

Finally, we need to compare the *RG* with other historical accounts composed in the fourth century in order to understand the full scope of Ammianus' intellectual achievement. Should we see his work as an isolated monument? Are there contacts between the *RG* and other contemporary historical works?

1. THE CURRICULUM

Biographical evidence from several authors of Late Antiquity such as Augustine, Jerome or Gregory of Nazianzus suggests that the curriculum and the education system had not changed much since the end of the first century A.D., when the rhetorician and

educational theorist Quintilian, and the sophist Dio Chrysostom established its outlines.[2] The division of the curriculum into three categories (primary, secondary and higher education) is not a modern invention but a categorization based on ancient treatises, the literary sources, and, furthermore, on imperial legislation. For instance, the salaries assigned by a city council emphasized the distinctive educational roles of grammarians and rhetors.[3] Rhetoric was understandably defined as "higher education" since these studies were supposed to prepare the young student for a career in the imperial administration. The idea of a higher education, however, is even broader. In the Theodosian Code, we find the formula *profundior scientia atque doctrina* to refer to the notion of a higher level of instruction, including studies on philosophy and law.[4]

1.1. Primary Education.

According to the traditional scheme, after four or five years with the *magister ludi*, who taught the elements of reading and writing, the student would theoretically enter the

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[2] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 10.1.69ff (ed. and trans. Russell); Dio Chrysostomus *Orationes* 18.8 ff (ed. and trans. Cohoon and Crosby). Henri Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 265-91. For additional bibliography on different aspects of Graeco-Roman education, including topics such as literary and education in Late Antiquity, see the following works: Donald Lemen Clark, *Rhetoric in Graeco-Roman Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957); M. L. Clarke, *Higher Education in the Ancient World* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1971) and *Rhetoric at Rome: A Historical Survey*, rev. D. H. Berry (London: Routledge, 1996); A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: A Social Economic and Administrative Survey,* vol. 2 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 986-1024; P. Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West: Sixth through Eighth Centuries,* trans. J. J. Contreni (Columbia, S.C., 1976); Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); Robin Lane Fox, "Literacy and Power in Early Christianity," in *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World,* ed. Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 126-48; R. Cribriore, *Writing, Teachers and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholar Press, 1996); Stanley F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[3] In *Codex Theodosianus* 13.3.11 (ed. and trans. Pharr), Valens prescribes for the cities of Gaul a salary of 24 *annona* for each rhetor and 12 *annona* for each grammarian; for the city of Trier the salary of the rhetor is 30 *annona*, that of the Latin grammarian being 20 *annona*. Finally, the Greek grammarian would receive 12 *annona*.

[4] *Codex Theodosianus* 14.9.3 (ed. and trans. Pharr).

school of the *grammaticus* at the age of 11 or 12.[5] The experience of Julian provides us with a glimpse of the content of the Greek curriculum during the first years.[6] At the age of seven Julian began his formal education in his household at Nicomedia. Although Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia (22.9.4), a relative of Julian's mother Basilina, was responsible for the child's education, it seems that this early training actually followed the patterns of the traditional pagan curriculum. Julian's first teacher was Mardonius, a Scythian eunuch who had once been the tutor of Basilina.[7] In his writings, Julian would often acknowledge the influence of his tutor in shaping his love for Greek literature, particularly Homer and Hesiod. The emperor saw these writers as playing a crucial role in both his aesthetical and ethical training.[8] The fact that Mardonius actually took Julian to school[9] suggests that he also received primary instruction from the grammarian, as was common among members of the upper classes. It is plausible that Julian had also begun the course of secondary education at Nicomedia.[10]

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[5] Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 274-83.

[6] For a reconstruction of Julian's early education see Polymnia Athanassiadi, *Julian: An Intellectual Biography* (London: Routledge, 1992), 13-21; Jean Bouffartigue, *L'Empereur Julien et la culture de son temps* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1992), 13-29; Rowland Smith, *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate* (London: Routledge, 1995), 23-25.

[7] To be precise, Mardonius was a pedagogue, the slave that took Julian to "elementary" school.

[8] Julian *Misopogon* 352ab (ed. and trans. Wright).

[9] Julian *Misopogon* 352c (ed. and trans. Wright).

[10] It is necessary to remember that we are here referring to the primary education of an individual of the upper class. Indeed, variations in the role of the *magister ludi* depend on class considerations. After a close reading of the literary sources (particularly the first book of Quintilian's *Instituto Oratoria*) A. D. Booth concludes that the *magister ludi* or elementary teacher only taught the lower classes to ensure them a basic education. On the other hand, the upper classes received the basic instruction at home or from the grammarian himself at a lower level of the grammar school. Booth also suggests that the young student entered the grammar school at an earlier age, possibly at the age of nine, like Quintilian's son: *Institutio oratoria* 1.4.2 (ed. and trans. Russell). See "Elementary and Secondary Education in the Roman Empire," *Florilegium* 1 (1979): 1-14; "The Schooling of Slaves in First-Century Rome," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 109 (1979): 11-19. In his study on secondary education in Late Antiquity, Kaster reinforces Booth's thesis with more evidence, especially from the fourth century. See "Notes on Primary and Secondary Schools in Late Antiquity," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 113 (1983): 323-46, and *Guardians of Language.*

Julian's early educational experience could be a good example of one of the features of the schooling system in the fourth century: the inability to implement a Christian curriculum. One may wonder what kind of spiritual influence Eusebius of Caesarea was actually able to exercise on the young Julian. As we will see through this chapter, in the study of education in Late Antiquity, we often witness a pervasive dichotomy between the teachings of the Christian doctrine and certain aspects of the Graeco-Roman curriculum. This contrast might eventually turn into a real tension, particularly when dealing with the higher levels of the curriculum: rhetorical and philosophical studies.

1.2. Secondary Education

At the secondary level, the student was required to follow the instructions of the *grammaticus* in order to memorize passages, and commentaries on those passages, as examples of the correct linguistic norm, a usage dramatically removed from the contemporary spoken language. The intellectual significance of this teaching can be illustrated by a well-known example from the Latin tradition.[11] Jerome went to Rome from his native Stridon in Dalmatia in order to study under the grammarian Donatus, author of the *Ars Grammatica* and commentaries on the works of Terence and Virgil. Despite the occasional criticism of the content of Graeco-Roman education, later in his life Jerome recognized how this grammatical training was essential to acquire linguistic accuracy. Indeed, the list of authors he studied is impressive: Cicero, Sallust, Virgil, Terence, Plautus, Lucretius, Horace, Persius, Lucan, Ovid, Seneca, Martial and

[11] For the relevance of the *grammaticus* as arbiter of the correct linguistic usage, see Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 18-9; 32-95.

Quintilian. As J. N. D. Kelly argues, the linguistic standard was not the living language of contemporary masters but the works of those authors I have just mentioned. Indeed, Jerome's writings are highly influenced by these writers, who would also be the foundation for knowledge of history, general subjects, and moral behavior.[12] It is interesting to note that, in contrast to the increasing popularity of Latin studies in the East during the fourth century, the study of Greek was then declining in the West. Aside from well-known cases such as the early educational experience of Augustine, who struggled with Homer at his modest grammar school in North Africa,[13] it is also clear that Jerome did not acquire at school a first-hand knowledge of Greek classical literature. In fact, he only studied Greek systematically when he was living at Antioch in the middle 370s. There he attended the lectures by Apollinarius of Laodicea, becoming fairly familiar with Aristotle's works.[14]

In Julian's case, his instruction by Mardonius was interrupted when in 342 Constantius dispatched him from Constantinople—Eusebius of Nicomedia had moved there from Nicomedia in 337—to Macellum in Cappadocia. At the age of 11, he was then ready to begin secondary education.[15] In fact, we should rather say that at Marcellum he continued his secondary education. Julian described his six-year stay there in gloomy terms. In his *Letter to the Athenians*, he says that he was dragged from the schools, and shut off from liberal studies and social interaction. He adds that the study of philosophy

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[12] J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 10-17.
[13] Augustine *Confessions* 1.14.23 (ed. and trans. Watts).
[14] Kelly, *Jerome,* 14-17. For a detailed analysis of Jerome's limited knowledge of Greek literature, see Pierre Paul Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources,* trans. Harry E. Wedeck (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 58-89.
[15] Athanassiadi, *Julian: An Intellectual Biography,* 21-27; Bouffartigue, *L' Empereur Julien,* 29-39; Smith, *Julian's Gods,* 25-26.

kept him pure.[16] However, it is very possible that, retrospectively, Julian exaggerated the negative features of this period, considering that these six years were decisive in acquiring the foundations of Christian theology.

George of Cappadocia, later bishop of Alexandria, was then responsible for Julian's education. In two letters, the latter acknowledges familiarity with the library of George of Cappadocia, even including a description of its content: it held volumes of philosophy, rhetoric, Christian theology, and history, particularly Christian.[17] Bouffartigue has identified numerous verbal allusions to the scriptures (especially the Pentateuch and Mathew) in Julian's speech *Against the Galileans*, suggesting that he had received a solid religious instruction during his stay at Macellum.[18]

1.3. Higher Education

1.3.1. Rhetoric

A careful analysis of the lives of several fourth century writers reveals that Greek rhetorical instruction normally began 2 or 3 years before its Latin counterpart. It is also necessary to highlight that the actual duration of these studies varied according to the circumstances of a particular individual. Quintilian states that the Roman youth enters the school of rhetoric when he is approaching adulthood, approximately at the age of 15.[19] Jerome began his rhetorical studies at the same age.[20] Nevertheless, Quintilian laments that 15 is a late age if we compare it with the Greek curriculum, where the student already starts taking classes with the rhetor when he is 12 and continues this study until

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[16] Julian *Letter to the Senate and people of Athens* 271bd (ed. and trans. Wright).
[17] Julian *Epistulae* 23; 38 (ed. and trans. Wright).
[18] Bouffartigue, *L'Empereur Julien*, 156-70.
[19] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 2.2.3 (ed. and trans. Russell).
[20] A. D. Booth, "The Date of Jerome's Birth," *Phoenix* 33 (1979): 347-48.

he leaves for the rhetorical school at the age of 15.[21] Booth rightly argues that this chronology suits the case of Libanius. Although the orator declares that his "conversion" to rhetoric took place just before he was 15,[22] Booth's careful examination of the chronology shows that Libanius had already started his rhetorical studies at the age of 13. While Libanius is not a classic example (after the death of his teacher of rhetoric, Libanius studied with a grammarian for several years until he left for Athens in 336),[23] beginning the rhetorical studies at this early age seems to be a feature of the Greek curriculum.[24]

As I mentioned above, we cannot talk about a standard length of rhetorical education. For instance, we know that Libanius, being 25 years old at the time, wanted to add four more years of rhetorical training to the four he had already spent at Athens.[25] Basil of Caesarea was also 25 years old when he arrived at Athens in 349 to study rhetoric, and stayed there until 355.[26] Gregory of Nazianzus spent between 12 and 13 years in his studies of rhetoric and philosophy.[27] John Chrysostom, who was born between 340 and 349, was 18 years old when he finished his studies of rhetoric under Libanius.[28]

The training in rhetoric started with preliminary exercises known as *progymnasmata* in which students learnt to imitate examples of rhetorical *tropes* from

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[21] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 2.1.1-13 (ed. and trans. Russell).
[22] Libanius *Orationes* 1.5.8 (ed. and trans. Norman)
[23] Libanius *Orationes* 1.8 (ed. and trans. Norman).
[24] A. J. Festugière argues that the normal age of Libanius' students was between 14 and 18. See *Antioche païenne et chrétienne: Libanius, Chrysostome et les moines de Syrie* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1959), 187, n. 4.
[25] Libanius *Orationes* 1.25 (ed. and trans. Norman).
[26] Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 27-60.
[27] Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gregory of Nazianzus, Rhetor and Philosopher* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 19.
[28] Palladius *Dialogus de vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi* 5 (ed. Coleman-Norton). See. J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom – Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), Appendix B.

classical authors. These exercises were followed by declamation, the composition and delivery of speeches on imaginary subjects. Unfortunately, due to the conservative nature of this type of instruction, it is difficult to date the extant treatises with absolute certainty. The handbook on *progymnasmata* by Aphthonius is traditionally placed in the fourth century; a similar manual attributed to Hermogenes is somewhat earlier.[29] The treatise on epideictic oratory by Menander Rhetor has been attributed to the late third or early fourth century.[30]

In one of John Chrysostom's early writings, we can find a striking illustration of how this type of rhetorical training could have a direct impact on the composition of a literary work. In the short essay known as *Comparatio regis et monachi*,[31] John argues that it is not the emperor but the monk who is the true king. The author describes the monk as the embodiment of ascetism and other Christian virtues. The emperor, on the other hand, is depicted as being enslaved to earthly passions and vices. Whereas the monk does not fear death, the emperor is terrified by it. The piece is actually an interpretation of the ancient stoic paradox that only the wise man possesses the virtues traditionally ascribed to an ideal emperor: freedom, intelligence and wealth. As Kelly points out, John's essay follows all the composition rules contained in the so-called "comparison," one of the preliminary rhetorical exercises or *progymnasmata*.[32] Furthermore, C. Fabricius identifies four phrases that had been borrowed from speeches

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[29] See George Alexander Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 54-73; R. F. Hock and E. N. O'Neill, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric: The Progymnasmata*, vol. 1 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholar Press, 1986).

[30] For a discussion of the scholarship on the date and authorship, see D. A. Russell and Nigel Guy Wilson, ed. and trans., *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), xxxiv-xl.

[31] John Chrysostom *Comparatio regis et monachi* (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Graeca* 47.387-392).

[32] Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 21.

recently delivered by his teacher of rhetoric, Libanius.[33] In a broad sense, the influence of both secondary and rhetorical education is pervasive in the works of John Chrysostom. Apart from the impact of Libanius' rhetoric on his early writings, Fabricius identifies three other literary models present in his later sermons and treatises: Demosthenes, Plato, and Homer.[34] Overall, the standard content of the rhetorical curriculum is confirmed by the testimony of Libanius. In a letter, the orator praises Postumianus for being knowledgeable of the main Greek authors to be studied:

> You supplemented your native tongue with knowledge of it by dint of much eagerness and much industry, both by day and by lamplight, and in consequence you have filled your soul with Homer, Hesiod, and the rest of the poets, and Demosthenes, Lysias, and the rest of the orators. Herodotus, Thucydides, and all their company could claim that there is room for them too in your intellect, and as witness of this they could cite the many fine orations you have composed.[35]

Although John Chrysostom chose to stay in his native Antioch to undertake his rhetorical education under Libanius, it was fairly common that after the grammatical instruction students traveled to other educational centres in search of the best rhetors. For instance, after receiving his primary and secondary education at Nazianzus and Cappadocian Caesarea respectively, Gregory of Nazianzus spent between 2 and 3 years in Palestinian Caesarea and Alexandria in pursuit of his rhetorical studies. Then, he departed to Athens around 349, where he spent another 10 years carrying on his rhetorical and, probably,

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[33] The passages are from *Orationes.* 13 and 64, and Plato's *Apologia.* See C. Fabricius, "Vier Libanius stellen bei Johannes Chrysostomus," *Symbolae Osloenses* 33 (1957): 135-36; *Zu den Jugendschriften des J. Chrysostomus: Untersuchungen zum Klassizismus des vierten Jahrhunderts* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1962), 119-211. These speeches date from 362-63, and praise the ascetic habits of Julian, who was then resident in Antioch.

[34] Fabricius, "Vier Libanius stellen bei Johannes Chrysostomus," 143-49.

[35] Libanius *Epistulae* 181.4-5 (ed. and trans. Norman).

philosophical education.[36] Basil of Caesarea first studied at Caesarea and Constantinople (possibly under Libanius)[37] before moving to Athens to continue his rhetorical training.[38] At the age of 20, Libanius also moved to Athens to improve his rhetorical skills, remaining in the city for 4 years (336-40).[39]

Undoubtedly, Athens was the main educational centre in the East. Despite a dramatic setback in the third century, when the city was destroyed by the Heruls in their incursions of 267 and 268, literary evidence suggests that by the middle of the fourth century Athens had significantly recovered economically, re-establishing its old reputation as an intellectual centre.[40] Eunapius' *Vitae sophistarum* and Gregory's *In laudem Basilii magni*[41] offer a vivid picture of student life in the city. The student body was radically divided by their alliances to certain rhetors. Although a prospective student may have chosen a teacher of rhetoric according to his reputation and geographical origin, rival gangs still attempted to recruit, often by violence, new pupils for the rhetors they admired. In turn, there was an intense rivalry among the rhetors themselves: a chair of rhetoric meant not only a salary but also exemption from taxations and services to the imperial government.

Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil of Caesarea studied under the pagan Himerius and the Christian Prohaeresius, the main teachers at Athens in the second half of the

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[36] Ruether, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 18-19.
[37] Timothy D. Barnes, "Himerius and the Fourth Century," *Classical Philology* 82 (1987): 206-25.
[38] Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea,* 1-26.
[39] Libanius *Orationes* 1.16-27(ed. trans. Norman).
[40] Rousseau argues that the archaeological evidence does not accurately reflect what literary sources say about important social and economic transformations in the city, including the growing impact of Christian patronage. See Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 29-30; Alison Frantz, "From Paganism to Christianity in the Temples of Athens," *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 19 (1965): 185-205; Homer A. Thompson, *Athenian Twilight: A. D. 267-600* (London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1959).
[41] Eunapius *Vitae sophistarum* (ed. and trans. Wright). Gregory of Nazianzus *Orationes* 43 (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Graeca* 36.607-606).

fourth century.[42] In 361 Himerius took advantage of Julian's rise to power to compose a speech that summarized the main objective of his teaching: to encourage involvement in public affairs.[43] For instance, in his speech delivered in honour of the *magister* Hermogenes, Himerius states that there is a natural progression between philosophy and the participation in the tasks of government.[44] Prohaeresius would eventually become famous when he refused Julian's exemption from the decree forbidding Christians to teach. This honourable gesture does not mean that Prohaeresius' faith had an impact on his teaching. As Rousseau argues, it is unlikely that Julian would have made this particular offer if Prohaeresius had been engaged in any sort of Christian teaching.[45] Furthermore, Eunapius, who openly criticized Christianity on multiple occasions, consistently praised Prohaeresius.[46]

1.3.2. Philosophy.

The educational experience of Julian suggests that it was possible to study philosophy, or join a particular philosophic school such as Iamblichan Neoplatonism, while undertaking rhetorical studies. Julian was studying rhetoric under Hecebolius at Nicomedia in the late 340s,[47] when he became interested in theurgy. In 351, he went to Pergamum to become the pupil of Aedesius, a disciple of the famous Iamblichus. After studying under Chrysanthius and Eusebius of Myndus, he went to Ephesus to be initiated

[42] Eunapius *Vitae sophistarum* 485- 494 (ed. and trans. Wright).
[43] Eunapius *Vitae sophistarum* 494 (ed. and trans. Wright).
[44] Barnes, "Himerius and the Fourth Century," 207.
[45] Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 32.
[46] Eunapius *Vitae sophistarum* 489-90 (ed. and trans. Wright)
[47] Hecebolius had extracted a promise from Julian not to attend the lectures of Libanius. Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 26-7.

into the theurgic mysteries by Maximus, a former disciple of Aedesius.[48] According to a letter written in 363, Julian saw this act as a kind of conversion that marked his official rejection of Christianity.[49] At the end of 354, Julian went to Athens to continue his studies, remaining there until he was appointed Caesar the following year. Although he attended the lectures of Prohaeresius, it seems that Priscus, a disciple of Aedesius, was Julian's most important intellectual influence at Athens.

One may ask about the range of philosophic studies offered at Athens in the fourth century. Did the city maintain the philosophic prestige of previous centuries? According to a speech by Himerius, courses in Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic and Epicurean philosophy were offered at that time.[50] However, we do not know whether Himerius' statement implies that those schools still existed in the fourth century. In the past, the schools of Athens (Academy, Lyceum, Stoa and Garden) had produced lists containing the names of the heads of the schools going back to their respective founders. It is possible that these lists had already disappeared by the second century A.D. Although we know that Marcus Aurelius established four imperial chairs—one for each school— it is uncertain whether these chairs are to be identified with the heads of the schools. Himerius' words may simply refer to the philosophic doctrines. Possibly, the only surviving school in the fourth century was the Academy, represented by Neoplatonist philosophers with theurgic interests. In the 350s, two opposing groups of Neoplatonists were at Athens: the followers of Priscus and Theodorus of Asine.

Julian's early contact with Neoplatonism was not the rule. Philosophy was normally restricted to a few gifted students who had already finished their rhetorical

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[48] Smith, *Julian's Gods*, 29-30.
[49] Julian *Epistulae* 47.434d (ed. and trans. Wright).
[50] Himerius *Orationes* 48 (ed. Colonna).

training. Normally, the student would join a particular school and attend the lectures of a philosopher who would become his spiritual tutor.[51] Certainly, the student of rhetoric had access to an introduction to philosophy in the form of doxographies and anthologies. In a passage of *Against Heraclius* Julian's enumerations of philosophers and branches of philosophies suggests that he followed the conventional pattern found in this type of works.[52] Furthermore, it is interesting to note that philosophical works written in a codex format may have been popular in the fourth century. In a letter written when traveling to Antioch, Julian refers to 'folding tablets'[53] containing the works of Plato and Homer. The fact that these tablets were tied fast to him like personal ornaments or amulets suggests that this small format may have included just a selection of philosophical texts.

> The gods of eloquence bear me witness that, except for Homer and Plato, I have with me not so much as a pamphlet on philosophy, rhetoric, or grammar, or any historical work of the sort that is in general use. And even these that I have are like personal ornaments or amulets, for they are always tied fast to me. [54]

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[51] Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle were certainly part of the rhetorical curriculum, but they were studied from a literary point of view. Apuleius allegorically illustrates how in the second century only an intellectual elite undertook philosophical studies. In *Florida* 20 he states that education offers only three cups (elementary school, grammar school and rhetorical school) instead of the four cups offered at the banquet table, Philosophy, and other disciplines such as geometry and music, being an exceptional draught for the few: "This is as far as most people go in drinking, but I have drunk other bowls at Athens: the specially made wine of poetry, the clear white of geometry, the sweet Muscat of music, the dry red of dialectics, and the never sating nectar of universal philosophy." Apuleius *Florida* 20 (trans. Hilton). See Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 208 ff.

[52] Julian *Orationes* 7.215cd (ed. and trans. Wright). See Bouffartigue, *L'Empereur Julien*, 329-31.

[53] As Lionel Casson shows, the codex was the offspring of the wooden writing tablet that the ancients had used for taking notes. When more space was required than a single board, they stacked a number of them and bound them together by making holes on one edge and passing a cord through the holes. According to the earliest literary references, the Romans substituted parchment sheets for the wooden tablets in the first century A.D. Those 'folding tablets' referred in the letter must refer to the binding protecting folded writing surfaces, parchment or papyrus. See Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 124-36.

[54] Julian *Epistulae* 29 (ed. and trans. W. C. Wright).

1.3.3. Legal Studies.

By the fourth century, the practice of law was highly professionalized to meet the high standards of legal theory and codification.[55] The traditional training in the *studia liberalia* needed then to be complemented by a four-year instruction in law.[56] The collections of Papinian, Paulus, Ulpian and Modestinus were the available sources for private law. In addition, the *Codex Gregorianus* and the *Codex Hermogenianus* represented imperial legislation. Professional legal training was gradually being formalized in the fourth century: there were chairs in Rome and Constantinople, and a law school at Beirut.[57] Honoré's analysis of the educational background of the sixth-century *quaestor*, Tribonian, can provide us with a general idea about what type of education was expected from those composing imperial legislation. It is extremely likely that Tribonian studied law at Beirut. There he became familiar with numerous legal sources, including imperial constitutions, classical and post-classical, pagan and Christian. Further, Tribonian was acquainted with the political history of the Roman Empire and its institutions. Since he needed to be competent in Greek and Latin grammar and rhetoric, he had at least a superficial knowledge of the most important classical writers in both languages.[58]

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[55] For an examination of the rhetorical background and knowledge of technical language that were necessary for the composition of the law, see Tony Honoré, *Tribonian* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978), 70-138; Jill Harries, "The Roman Imperial Quaestor from Constantius to Theodosius II," *Journal of Roman Studies* 78 (1988): 148-72; Geoffrey Greatrex, "Lawyers and Historians in Late Antiquity," in *Law, Society and Authority in Late Antiquity*, ed. Ralph W. Mathisen (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 155-57.

[56] Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1, 513, n.99.

[57] Linda Jones Hall, *Roman Berytus: Beirut in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2004), 195-219.

[58] Honoré, *Tribonian*, 43-44. For a comprehensive examination of John Lydus and the bureaucracy in the sixth century, see C. M. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 11-104.

As the testimony of Libanius reveals, easterners might have seen the study of law as a dramatic contrast to the traditional rhetorical training. Indeed, a student at the law school in Rome or Beirut would focus on the technical knowledge of legal language rather than on rhetorical skills. Libanius overtly criticizes the practice of law wherein the legal expert, who previously was a mere secretary, eclipses the orator.[59] A new development that considerably limited the delivery of forensic speeches was the increasing relevance of written documents in the legal proceedings. A written indictment had to be carefully prepared and, eventually examined in court through the judge's questions to the lawyers of the litigants. As the *Justinian Code* reveals,[60] the judge was given a greater role, acting often as both judge and prosecutor. Presumably, the judge's educational background would determine the amount of rhetoric allowed in court. Who were these judges? Generally, they were the governors of provinces and urban prefects. Some of them arrived to the post through influence, lacking legal expertise. In an *excursus* on the Persians, Ammianus observes that Persian judges were experienced lawyers, who did not need advisers and despised the Roman habit of having a council of legal experts to support an ignorant judge (23.6.82).[61] Some judges had a more technical expertise of the law as well as experience in the civil service. The latter category is well exemplified by Ammianus' negative portrayal of the urban prefect Orfitus, Symmachus' father in law: "He was a man of wisdom, it is true, and highly skilled in legal practice, but less equipped with the adornment of the liberal arts than became a man of noble rank" (14.6.1).

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[59] Libanius *Orationes* 2.44. (ed. and trans. Norman). Jones, *The Later Roman Empire,* vol. 1, 512-13.
[60] *Codex Iustinianus* 3.1.9 (ed. Krueger).
[61] See Jill Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 102-3.

2. THE IDEA OF EDUCATION

In this section, I will include a brief summary of how some of Ammianus' contemporaries viewed education. From the testimonies included here, we will soon realize that some of Ammianus' contemporaries viewed the concept of education as being intimately linked with the idea of cultural and personal identity. While Christian authors did not attempt to provide a systematic alternative to the curriculum in the fourth century, they interpreted their educational experience in new different ways. My approach is certainly selective, concentrating on the extremist pagan view of Julian as opposed to the increasing Christian discourse represented by Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil of Caesarea.

Julian's intellectual pursuits during his short stay at Athens in 355 were mainly focused on philosophy. Although he knew both Himerius and Prohaeresius,[62] it seems that the future emperor did not join the circles of learning frequented by Gregory and Basil. Julian's nostalgic vision of Athens suggests that he was probably unable to come to terms with the cultural reality of the city. It is not surprising that his extremist version of Hellenism did not find a widespread support even among pagans:

> What! Was it not the gods who revealed all their learning to Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates and Lysias? Did not these men think that they were consecrated, some to Hermes, others to the Muses? I think it is absurd that men who expound the works of these writers should dishonour the gods whom they used to honour. Yet, though I think this absurd, I do not say that they ought to change their opinions and then instruct the young. But

[62] Athanassiadi, *Julian: An Intellectual Biography*, 47-48.

I give them this choice; either not to teach what they do not think admirable, or, if they wish to teach, let them first really persuade their pupils that neither Homer nor Hesiod nor any of these writers whom they expound and have declared to be guilty of impiety, folly and error in regard to the gods, is such as they declare. For since they make a livelihood and receive pay from the works of those writers, they thereby confess that they are most shamefully greedy of gain, and that, for the sake of a few drachmae, they would put up with anything.[63]

Ammianus was exceptionally critical of Julian's decree (22.10.7; 25.4.20). Gregory of Nazianzus reacted against what he saw as an attempt to prevent Christians from interpreting Hellenism.[64] In fact, he never rejected his own background in Greek rhetoric and philosophy.[65]

Gregory's attitude towards Greek culture was not unique. As Rousseau convincingly argues, Christians did not see themselves in relation to their contemporaries in terms of a dramatic conflict between Christian faith and pagan culture.[66] Rather than questioning the validity of the curriculum, Christian authors such as Gregory of Nazianzus acknowledged the relevance of rhetorical skills for the construction of theological arguments, arguing that by identifying the weaknesses of the traditional curriculum one would eventually highlight the strength of the Christian doctrine:

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[63] Julian *Epistulae* 36.423ab (ed. and trans. Wright). For the legislation itself, see *Codex Theodosianus.* 13.3.5 (ed. and trans. Pharr). The term Hellenism Ἑλληνισμός, was originally coined at the beginning of the Hellenistic period to signify the proper use of the Greek language. See R. Laqueur, "Hellenismus," *Schriften der hessischen Hochshulen* 1 (1925): 22 ff. Julian's words reflect the culmination of a long intellectual tradition that had been shaping the meaning of Hellenism in the two previous centuries. It is fair to say that in the fourth century some believed that Greek culture was of a sacred character, the result of divine inspiration. Athanassiadi offers an overview of how the meaning of Hellenism was affected by two centuries of religious and philosophic debate, highlighting the interpretations of Celsus, Origen, Plotinus, Porphyry, the *Chaldean Oracles*, and Iamblichus. See *Julian: An Intellectual Biography*, 1-12; Yochanan Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1978). See also G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

[64] Gregory of Nazianzus *Orationes* 4 ; 5 (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Graeca* 35.531-720); Ruether, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 18-54.

[65] Gregory of Nazianzus *Orationes* 43.14 (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Graeca* 36.607-606).

[66] Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 50.

I take it all intelligent men agree that among human advantages education holds first place. I refer not only to our nobler form of it which disdains all the ambitious ornaments of rhetoric and attaches itself only to salvation and the beauty of what is accessible to the mind, but also that external culture which many Christians by an error of judgement scorn as treacherous and dangerous and as turning us away from God. We have adopted principles of inquiry and speculation, while we have rejected whatever leads to demons, and error, and the abyss of perdition. And from such material we have drawn profit for piety, by learning to distinguish the better from the worse, and from its weakness we have made our own doctrine strong.[67]

A more critical approach to the Graeco-Roman curriculum can be found in the works of Basil of Caesarea. For instance, in his homilies, Basil consciously tried to detach himself from the use of traditional rhetorical skills, stating that Christianity had its own rules for public declamation. In addition, in his treatise *Ad adulescentes*, we find a systematic attempt to explain how the moral teaching of scriptures may be decisive in the selection of literary works:

And since it is through virtue that we must enter upon this life of ours, and since much has been uttered in praise of virtue by poets, much by historians, and much more still by philosophers, we ought especially to apply ourselves to such literature.[68]

Finally, in a strictly pagan context, we must also mention an important intellectual debate dealing with the role of παιδεία in politics.[69] This discussion was polarized

[67] Gregory of Nazianzus *Orationes.* 43.11 (trans. McCauley).
[68] Basil of Caesarea *Ad adulescentes* 5 (ed. and trans. Deferrari).
[69] The bibliography on the significance of παιδεία in antiquity is certainly vast. Here I only include a selection of titles that particularly emphasize the following subjects: παιδεία as a means of social advancement and cultural identity, the impact of Christianity on the curriculum, and the role of philosophers and bishops as representatives of the values of παιδεία: Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945); *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961); L. Robert, "Epigrammes du Bas-

between Libanius and Themistius in the fourth century. While the former considered rhetorical training within the traditional social and political values of the *polis*,[70] the latter placed rhetoric at the service of the state: the philosopher's *parrhésia* (independence of status) would entitle him to deliver reminders to the emperors and administrators of the empire.[71]

3. BILINGUALISM IN THE EAST

Most educated people living in the eastern part of the Empire spoke Greek, aside from whatever regional language they knew as well. Latin was used in the court, the army, and the courtrooms. It was a taught language that an ambitious young man studied and mastered to advance in his career. Thus, Ammianus himself emphasizes the role of bilingualism in the successful career of Musonianus:

After Domitianus was dispatched by a cruel death, his successor Musonianus governed the East with the rank of praetorian prefect, a man famed for his command of both languages (*facundia sermonis utriusque clarus*), from which he won higher distinction than was expected. For when Constantine was closely investigating the different religious sects, Manichaeans and the like, and no suitable interpreter could be found, he chose him, as a person recommended to him as

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Empire," *Hellenica* 4 (1948): 35-114; Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*; Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 35-70; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 223-48.

[70] J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 242-55; A. F. Norman, *Antioch as a Centre of Greek Culture as Observed by Libanius* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000).

[71] Glanville Downey, "Education and Public Problems as Seen by Themistius," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 86 (1955): 291-307; "Themistius and the Defense of Hellenism in the Fourth Century," *Harvard Theological Review* 50 (1957): 259-74; John Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court: Oratory, Civic Duty, and Paideia from Constantius to Theodosius* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 1-30.

competent; and when he had done that duty skilfully, he wished him to be called Musonianus, whereas he had hitherto had many grades of honour, he rose to the prefecture (15.13.1-2).

John Chrysostom also describes how knowledge of Latin offered great practical advantages for a future career in the imperial administration:

When parents urge their children to study rhetoric, all they say are words like this: "A certain man, of low estate, born of lowly parents, after achieving the power that comes from rhetoric, obtained the highest positions, gained great wealth, married a rich woman, built a splendid house, and is feared and respected by all." And another one says: "A certain man after learning Latin became illustrious in the emperor's service and he manages and administers all internal business."[72]

At Antioch, the orator Libanius became increasingly concerned about the popularity of Latin studies, considering them a direct threat to the survival of Greek education. The law school at Beirut is a good example. In numerous letters, Libanius sadly comments how his own students interrupted their courses of Greek rhetoric to attend the law school there, or how they started Law after completing their studies of rhetoric.[73] The orator also emphasizes the fact that their real motivation was not to employ their bilingual skills in the council back home, but to use the new qualifications as a way to avoid membership in the council and, eventually, to elevate their social status by obtaining imperial bureaucratic positions:

And, moreover, you are open to reproof on the following grounds. Every spring you see the sons of present, or past, members of the council sailing off to Berytus or to Rome, and you are not angry or annoyed, nor do you seek audience with the governors and complain as you should. But

[72] John Chrysostom *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* 3.5 (trans. Hunter).
[73] Libanius *Epistulae.* 1431; 1170-1; 1203; 652-3; 1528-9; 339; 87; 1539; 1375; 1203 (ed. Foerster). See Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, 243, n. 10.

who is so dull-witted, such a booby or simpleton as to be incapable of understanding what their trip implies for them? It is out of no concern for justice or to avoid any inadvertent breach of the laws that they set sail for Phoenicia, nor do they sail to the other place so as to assist the council by their proficiency in both languages; their concern is to have their legal or linguistic qualification as a means of getting out of membership of council. Nor have they been deceived in their ambition. We know what their status should rightly be and what it now is.[74]

Imperial legislation suggests that the situation described by Libanius took place in other parts of the empire. A law of 370 stipulates that no student may stay at Rome after his twentieth birthday. The law is specifically addressed to students from Africa who are due to return home to fulfill their curial duties after they have finished their studies. The same piece of legislation refers to the possibility of employment only for those students who performed well in the course of their education.[75]

Since bilingualism played a decisive role in the future career of ambitious young students from the East, it is reasonable to ask whether these students had access to some kind of Latin instruction in their respective cities before moving to important educational centres such as Beirut or Rome. By attempting to establish whether the teaching of Latin was widespread in the cities and towns of the East, we will be able to address certain issues that are directly relevant to the study of Ammianus' early background. For instance, we will need to examine whether bilingualism actually produced a cultural assimilation in the East. By cultural assimilation, I refer to the possibility that a significant group of individuals considered Latin not only a useful instrument to advance in their careers but also a vehicle of culture. Similarly, we should inquire whether

[74] Libanius *Orationes* 48.22 (ed. and trans. Norman)
[75] *Codex. Theodosianus* 14.9.1 (370) (ed. and trans. Pharr). See Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, 245.

Ammianus' choice to write a history of the Roman Empire in Latin could be explained in terms of a wider cultural assimilation among the intellectual elite of the East.

It has been traditionally considered that Greeks were indifferent or even hostile to the learning of other languages, which they would have judged as "barbaric".[76] Libanius' attitude towards the Latin language well exemplifies this intellectual prejudice. In many ways, the orator represents a desperate attempt to defend the values of Hellenism against the increasing Christianisation of the population and the popularity of Roman studies: Latin and Roman Law. According to the evidence contained in his letters and speeches, Libanius consistently detaches himself from the milieu of the Latin language. In a passage of his *Autobiography*, Libanius denies the rumour that his great-grandfather came from Italy. The orator states that he was originally from Antioch.[77] This rumour was based on a speech given in Latin by Libanius' great-grandfather in Antioch. Libanius' uncle, Phasganius, ignored the Latin language and was proud of his ignorance.[78] Libanius himself claims that he could not read Latin: he needed an interpreter to read a letter of Symmachus.[79] Indeed, Liebeschuetz suggests that "fluent knowledge of Latin was unusual among the *curiales* of Antioch." He bases his argumentation on the case of Libanius: the orator along with some members of his family did not know Latin.[80] However, it is very plausible that the orator was consciously insulating himself from the Latin language and culture as part of his ideological project to revitalize Hellenic culture in the city. We should not forget that Libanius made every effort to present Antioch as a creation of Alexander and his successors, completely

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[76] Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 257-58.
[77] Libanius *Orationes* 1.3 (ed. and trans. Norman).
[78] Libanius *Orationes*. 49. 29 (ed. and trans. Norman).
[79] Libanius *Epistulae* 177.4. Cf. 181.2 (ed. and trans. Norman).
[80] Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, 248.

ignoring the contribution of Rome.[81] The fact that the orator criticizes a Roman correspondent for writing to him in Latin may imply an ideological pose.

So, having gained such a knowledge of Greek, as well as of Latin, that you would carry conviction if you were to describe yourself as an Athenian, employ your present gifts upon us, and your future letters—for obviously, having once begun, you will not stop—do not again send to the lips of interpreters. [82]

Nevertheless, that this correspondent had directed himself in that language in the first place suggests that he assumed that knowledge of Latin was common in Antioch.

It is likely that Libanius' attitude did not find resonance with the vast majority of the Antiochene *curiales*. In fact, they did not hesitate to send their sons to Rome or Beirut to study Latin and Roman law. Recent research has shown that having some knowledge of Latin became increasingly popular, particularly in the fourth century as Diocletian and his successors made a conscious effort to expand its use in the East.[83] There is evidence that young students had access to some kind of Latin instruction before they travelled to important educational centres such as Beirut and Rome. In his account of his upbringing at Neocaesarea, Gregory Thaumaturgus (c.213-c. 275) refers to an early Latin instruction that would prepare him for further studies at Beirut:

But, that divine conductor and true curator, ever so watchful, when my friends were not thinking of such a step, and when I was not myself desirous of it, came and suggested (an extension of my studies) to one of my teachers under whose charge I had been put, with a view of instruction in

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[81] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 71.
[82] Libanius *Epistulae* 181.7 (ed. and trans. Norman).
[83] L. A. Holford-Strevens, "*Utraque lingua doctus*: Some Notes on Bilingualism in the Roman Empire," in *Tria Lustra*, ed. J. Pinsent, H. D. Jocelyn and H. Hurt, 203-13 (Liverpool: Liverpool Classical Monthly, 1993); Bruno Rochette, *Le latin dans le monde grec: Recherches sur la diffusion de la langue et des lettres latines dans les provinces hellénophones de l'Empire romain* (Brussels: Latomus, 1997), 69-82.

the Roman tongue, not in the expectation that I was to reach the completest masterly of that tongue, but only that I might not be absolutely ignorant of it; and this person happened also to be not altogether unversed in laws. Putting the idea, therefore, into this teacher's head, he set me to learn in a thorough way the laws of the Romans by his help… And he said one thing, which has proved to me the truest of all his sayings, to wit, that my education in the laws would be my greatest *viaticum* ('εφόδιον)—for thus he phrased it—whether I aspired to be one of the public speakers who contend in the courts of justice, or preferred to belong to a different order.[84]

Papyrological evidence from Egypt indicates that Latin was widely employed in legal documents in the fourth century. For instance, the protocols of hearings held before the governor were in Latin whereas the speeches were recorded in Greek.[85] The content of some papyri reveal that in the fourth century Egyptians engaged not only in the study of the basic legal jargon that was necessary for the bar, but also in the reading of a few classical authors, especially Virgil and Cicero.

Further, Rochette has analyzed the role of bilingual manuals in education. This material can be divided into three main groups: Latin alphabets with their Greek equivalence, Latin and Greek-Latin grammars, and bilingual glossaries. The latter category consists of three types of works: lexicographical works, conversation manuals, and glossaries of Latin authors—particularly Virgil and Cicero—containing translations *ad verbum*.[86]

It is significant that Latin instruction was available in small towns such as Oxyrhynchus. There is also evidence that in the Antinoupolis of the fifth century a

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[84] *Panegyricus in Originem*. 5.57-61(trans. Roberts and Donaldson).
[85] Henrik Zilliacus, *Zum Kampf der Weltsprachen im oströmischen Reich* (Helsingfors: [Mercators tryckeri aktiebolag], 1935), 97; U. Wilken, "Über den Nutzen der Lateinischen Papyri," *Atti del IV Congresso di papirologia: Firenze, 28 aprile-2 maggio 1935* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1936), 100ff. For the teaching of Latin in Egypt see J. N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 623-30.
[86] Rochette, *Le latin dans le monde grec*, 165-210.

difficult poet like Juvenal was studied with the aid of an elaborate commentary.[87] Although the papyrological evidence exclusively refers to a demand for Latin instruction in the towns of Upper Egypt, one must reasonably expect that an important educational centre like Alexandria offered even more opportunities for the study of Latin. In the fifth century, Proclus came from Lycia, and Severus from Sozopolis, to study Latin rhetoric at Alexandria. As Cameron convincingly argues, it is difficult to understand Claudian's masterly command of the Latin language without acknowledging the increasing relevance of Latin instruction in Egypt during the fourth century.[88]

As regards the city of Antioch, Libanius is ironically our best witness for the rising demand for instruction in Latin and Roman Law.[89] For example, he tried to persuade a teacher of law to come to Antioch.[90] Again, he was in charge of finding a teacher for the chair in Roman Law established in 360.[91] Libanius also tried to hire a Latin professor for his school,[92] and he mentions the case of a Latin teacher, Celsus II, who established himself independently.[93] In the last two decades of the fourth century, the orator saw the threat of Latin instruction increase considerably: Latin rhetoric became a firm rival.[94]

It is difficult to know whether Roman Law was actually taught in Latin at Antioch. It is actually plausible that it was taught in Greek, and included some Latin instruction in order to enable the student to write basic legal Latin. For instance, the

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[87] C. H. Roberts, "The Antinoe Fragment of Juvenal," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 21 (1935): 199-207.
[88] Alan Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 19-21.
[89] Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, 244-55.
[90] *Epistulae* 433 (ed. Foerster).
[91] *Epistulae* 209 (ed. Foerster).
[92] *Epistulae* 534; 539 (ed. Foerster).
[93] *Epistulae* 363 (ed. Foerster).
[94] Libanius *Orationes* 1.255; 38.6 (ed. Foerster).

Antiochene John Chrysostom initially intended to make a career in the higher civil administration. According to Palladius' biography, *Dialogus de vita S. Joannis Chrysotomi*, John "was given a through training in rhetoric with a view to the service of the imperial pronouncements."[95] Therefore, John was trained to work as a clerk in the *sacra scrinia*. In other words, he would be working as a clerk assisting in the drafting of *rescripta*, constitutions, and even legislation. John was acquainted with Roman Law by his assiduous attendance to the law-courts, as he himself states in his autobiographical work in defence of priesthood, *De sacerdotio*. Undeniably, we must acknowledge that fluency in Latin was not absolutely necessary to perform the duties as a secretariat in the *sacra scrinia*. In the legal profession, total bilingualism was only required in the highest offices such as the quaestorship.[96] If Antioch offered opportunities for instruction in Roman Law in Latin, one may wonder why the Antiochene parents would have bothered to send their sons to Beirut or to Rome. What the testimony from Libanius and John Chrysostom actually reveals is that Antioch provided some educational opportunities at the beginning level, which were required to start a career in the imperial administration. These included some sort of Latin instruction and training in Roman Law, probably taught mainly in Greek.

A prosopographic analysis for the fourth century tells us that, aside from Claudian and Ammianus, other easterners achieved a high command of the Latin language. Flavius Hermogenes was originally from Pontus.[97] Despite holding important offices in the

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[95] Palladius *Dialogus de vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi* 5 (ed. Coleman-Norton). For the translation and interpretation of this passage see A. H. M. Jones, "St. John Chrysostom's Parentage and Education," *Harvard Theological Review* 46 (1953): 171-73. See Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 15.
[96] John Chrysostom *De sacerdotio* 1.1-3 (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Graeca* 48. 623-92). Honoré, *Tribonian*, 70-123. For education in Latin and Roman Law at Beirut see Hall, *Roman Berytus*, 195-213.
[97] *PLRE* I. 423.

imperial administration, there is no evidence that he ever visited the West. At a young age, Hermogenes served at the court of the emperor Licinius. Eventually, he left the court and devoted himself to the study of philosophy, making himself fluent in both Latin and Greek. At Constantinople, he served Constantine I as *magister sacrarum scriniarum*, a post that required a good command of Latin.[98] After 337, Hermogenes was appointed proconsul of Achaea by one of the sons of Constantine, and, finally, at Antioch he held the office of praetorian prefect of the East. Libanius highly praises his command of Greek and Latin.[99] The grammarians Hierius[100] and Domitius Dracontius[101] were Syrians, perhaps from Antioch itself. Hierius taught first in Greek and later in Latin. He eventually became an accomplished orator at Rome. Augustine highly praised him in the dedication of his first book, *De pulchro et apto*.[102] In a subscription to the Pseudo Quintilian's *Declamationes*, Domitius Dracontius states that he corrected the manuscript with the aid of his brother Hierius. Publius Ampelius, prefect of Rome in 371-2, was an Antiochene according to Ammianus (28.4.3).[103] The duties of this high office required an excellent command of Latin.[104] Sidonius Apollinaris describes Ampelius as a poet to be compared to Paulinus and Symmachus.[105] Lastly, we must mention another citizen from Antioch: Evagrius.[106] He was a pupil of Libanius, and his command of Latin was probably the main reason why he was sent in numerous embassies to Rome before becoming the bishop of Antioch. Jerome mentions a Latin translation of Athanasius' *Life of St. Antony*

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[98] Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1, 504.
[99] *PLRE* I. 424-5.
[100] *PLRE* I. 431.
[101] *PLRE* I. 272.
[102] Augustine *Confesions* 4.14.21 (ed. and trans. Watts).
[103] *PLRE* I. 56-7.
[104] R. H. Barrow, ed. and trans., *Prefect and Emperor: The "Relationes" of Symmachus, A.D. 384* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 1-9.
[105] Sidonius Apollinaris *Carmina.* 9.304 (ed. and trans. Anderson).
[106] *PLRE* I. 285-6.

as one of Evagrius' main literary works. It seems that Evagrius' translation replaced an older Latin version that merely reproduced the literal meaning of the text.[107] The fact that Evagrius could achieve this is a testimony of his profound knowledge of Latin literature. Evagrius' version, which Augustine read in Milan in 385,[108] is probably the one that has been preserved.

In summary, it seems clear that it was technically possible to acquire a reasonable command of Latin in the East. The degree of fluency in the acquired language may have depended on different circumstances such as the nature of the post in the imperial court or even individual skills. Papyrological evidence from Egypt reveals that an important sector of the population was interested in acquiring a working knowledge of Latin. Bilingual manuals, dictionaries and translations were meant to provide a basic familiarity with the language. However, a different type of bilingualism was also possible: a kind of bilingualism in which performance in the second language was closer to native-like competence. A prosopographical examination for the fourth century shows that numerous individuals acquired a sophisticated command of Latin, which they articulated through translations, teaching, and original literary works. As I will argue in the next chapter, Ammianus belonged to this group. Though they initially saw Latin as a crucial vehicle to advance in their careers, it is clear that some kind of cultural assimilation took place. Traditionally, Greek authors had ignored Latin literature and language. This cultural prejudice dramatically changed when Diocletian's reforms strongly encouraged the learning of Latin in the East.

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[107] Evagrius Antiochenus *Interpretatio latina vitae S. Antonii* (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Graeca* 26.839-975).
[108] Augustine *Confessions* 8.6.15 (ed. and trans. Watts).

4. WRITING HISTORY IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

The prefaces and methodological statements scattered through the *RG* are opportunities for the writer for self-presentation, or attempts to convince the reader that his history was worth reading. By inserting these brief methodological digressions, the author had the opportunity to present his work as following the traditional conventions of the historiographical genre.[109] Ammianus clearly articulates some of the most important principles of the genre. The historian declares the truthfulness of the account, especially by highlighting the role of autopsy and information from eyewitnesses (15.1.1; 16.1.3; 23.6.1; 26.1.1). He explicitly rejects the use of accidental details (*minutiae*) probably alluding to the genres of biographies and chronicles. Instead, he proposes that the focus of the narrative be put on important events (*celsitudines/summitates rerum*), inviting the reader to acquire a wide knowledge (*ad scientiam plenam*)—perhaps a justification for the length of the geographical and scientific digressions (see Chapters 3 and 4). In other words, the reader would immediately know that he is encountering a serious work of history in the tradition of Thucydides and Polybius. In the broad context of Graeco-Roman historiography, the work of Ammianus closely resembles the intellectual scope of the so-called "universal history."[110] Being a Latin-writing Greek soldier who lived in Antioch and Rome, Ammianus was in a privileged position to embrace the political and cultural significance of both East and West. In this undertaking, he was certainly

[109] See the great summary of these formulaic self-presentations in D. Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2002), 150-59.
[110] Here I follow the conceptual frame employed in Charles W. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 42-46.

following the tradition of authors such as Ephorus, Polybius, Timagenes of Alexandria, and Pompeius Trogus.

None the less, it seems that Ammianus' intellectual achievement is an isolated case as we examine other historical works of the fourth century. What we often encounter is a series of literary genres lacking the intellectual prestige traditionally attributed to the composition of history: historical breviaries, imperial biographies, chronicles, and ecclesiastical history.

As Momigliano explains, the historical breviaries of Aurelius Victor, Eutropius and Festus were intended to educate the new ruling class of the fourth century (men promoted by Valentinian, Valens, and their sons) in the main facts of Roman history.[111] These writers were all imperial officials. For instance, we know that Aurelius Victor served under Julian. After being *magister epistularum* under Constantius, Eutropius also served under Julian, then was *magister memoriae* to Valens, like Festus, and eventually became prefect of Illyricum under Theodosius. Eutropius was a correspondent of Symmachus, and became consul in the same year as the emperor Valentinian II (387).[112]

The short histories of these authors deal with imperial character, the role of the senate (in the breviaries of Festus and Eutropius) and the eastern frontier, supporting imperial interests by promoting an aggressive policy against Persia. Similar to these historical summaries are the so-called *Origo gentis Romanae* and the *De viris illustribus,* which cover from legendary times to the fall of the republic.

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[111] Arnaldo Momigliano, "Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century A.D.," in *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century: Essays,* 85-6 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963).

[112] However, the *communis opinio* about Eutropius' career has been challenged recently. See R. W. Burguess, "Eutropius V. C. "Magister Memoriae?" *Classical Philology* 96, no.1 (2001): 76-81.

Imperial biographies such as the *Epitome de Caesaribus,* a series of brief lives from Augustus to Theodosius, were popular in the fourth century. Ammianus explicitly detaches himself from the biographical genre (26.1.1; 28.4.14), particularly when he criticizes the reading habits of the Roman aristocracy: they are only interested in sensational biographies and in authors such as the satirist Juvenal and the biographer Marius Maximus. That the biographical genre must have been popular at Rome in the last decades of the fourth century is further confirmed by the composition of the *Historia Augusta,* a set of imperial biographies from 96 A.D. to the accession of Diocletian. Most scholars now agree with Ronald Syme's conclusion that the *Historia Augusta* is the work of one author of the late fourth century rather of the six "Constantinian" authors claimed in the work.[113] As Christian counterparts of imperial biographies, we should mention the genre of Hagiography, represented by works like Jerome's *Lives of the Saints* and Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini.* Sabbah has suggested that this type of Christian writing may have influenced some passages in the *RG.* For instance, Sabbah argues that Ammianus describes Julian's daily habits in a way that reminds us the portrait of a monk who devotes his nights to vigil and prayer: indeed, Julian is praised for his constant frugality, dedicating much of the night to study and meditation (16.5.1-8). In addition, Sabbah continues, the emperor keeps a sort of *castitas* that can be interpreted as the sexual abstinence of the desert monks (16.5.8; 25.4.2-3).[114]

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[113] Ronald Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), and *The Historia Augusta: A Call of Clarity* (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1971).

[114] Guy Sabbah, "Ammianus Marcellinus," in *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century A.D.,* ed. Gabriel Marasco (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 63. As noted in the following chapter, Barnes argues that Ammianus sometimes unconsciously echoes Christian values and Christian vocabulary. See Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus,* 83-84.

In terms of the scope and concern for historical details, the *RG* could be to a certain extent compared with works of Church history. Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History,* which predates the *RG* by more than 60 years, can be considered the first history of this kind. The immediate continuators of this genre are Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret. Although these writers begin their work where Eusebius' history left off, they adopt different approaches to style, aims of the narrative, and the treatment of secular material. Other types of Christian narrative include the so-called "apologetic histories" such as Orosius' *Historiae adversos paganos* and Augustine' *De civitate dei.* These two works should be described as controversial rather than historical.

Indeed, the two main elements that distinguish Ammianus' history from the works cited above are the historian's conscious intention to link the *RG* with the Graeco-Roman historiographical tradition as well as his detachment from the language of religious controversy. Perhaps, the lost *Annales* by the leading senator Virius Nicomachus Flavianus shared characteristics with the general scope of the *RG.* The *Annales* is cited in two inscriptions, in one of which Flavianus is described as *historicus dissertissimus.*[115] One may only speculate about whether this work was a pagan manifesto, considering Flavianus' active participation in the traditional religion of Rome and, specially, his involvement in Eugenius' usurpation in 394.[116]

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[115] *PLRE* I. 347-9.

[116] See Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus,* 476-7, n.6. F. Paschoud argues that Ammianus' portrait of Valentinian is drawn from Nicomachus Flavianus. See "Valentinien travesti, ou: De la malignité d'Ammien," in *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus*, ed. J. den Boeft, Daniël den Hengst, and H. C. Teitler, 67-84 (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1992). Concerning the debate as to whether Flavianus' work dealt with Republican or late imperial history, see B. Bleckmann, "Bemerkungen zu den Annales des Nicomachus Flavianus," *Historia* 44 (1995): 83-99.

It is certainly attractive to compare the *RG* with the Greek secular historical tradition represented by the historical works of Eunapius of Sardis and his successors, Olympiodorus and Procopius. In the case of Eunapius, attempts to establish a close parallel are based on the fact that both historians cover some of the same events, particularly those regarding Julian's Persian expedition. However, what we actually have from Eunapius' history is a number of passages indirectly preserved by the pagan historian Zosimus, who wrote in the late fifth or beginning of the sixth century. Additionally, it is clear that the straightforward anti-Christian attitude of Eunapius, which is also found in Zosimus' history, is not found in the *RG*. Although Ammianus occasionally criticizes Christianity, by comparison his treatment of religion is unprejudiced, especially since the historian is not explicitly interested in theological controversies between Christians and non-Christians, but in the role of the traditional Roman cult in the Roman society (see Chapter 1).

Certainly, the brief summary presented above seems to confirm that the *RG* stands alone among other historical works of the period. It is even difficult to find an example of a contemporary author whose background could somehow resemble Ammianus'. As Greatrex explains, most historians of Late Antiquity were professional lawyers, a fact that helps us understand the nature and intention of their historical works. Whereas senatorial historians of the late Republic and early Empire composed history to vindicate their actions, often risking their lives by describing recent events, historians of Late Antiquity saw the composition of history as a way to further advance in their careers, consequently, being generally favourable to the reigning emperor. They were not members of the traditional Roman senatorial class but of the humbler provincial elite. For this class, a

training in law guaranteed social advancement.[117] In view of this, can we place Ammianus within this group of historians? As Cameron has rightly argued, there is no evidence that Ammianus conceived the *RG* as a way to enter the intellectual circles of the Roman elite.[118] However, as I will try to argue through this dissertation, the fact that Ammianus may have been socially isolated in the specific environment of the city of Rome does not necessarily mean that Ammianus was out of step with the culture of his age.

CONCLUSION

In the previous pages, I have attempted to provide the reader with a broad picture of the educational and cultural landscape in the East of the fourth century. I have used the framework of the educational curriculum as a useful tool that will help me contextualize my argument on Ammianus' own educational experience in the next chapter. The different estimations concerning the length of each phase of the curriculum are extremely relevant in order to explore Ammianus' cultural background before he joined the Roman army as a *protector domesticus* in his early twenties. The authors normally studied by his contemporaries should be a starting point as we analyze the literary sources employed by Ammianus. Is the historian borrowing from writers normally read at school? This question is particularly important in the study of the Latin literary sources. For instance, in the section on bilingualism, I have shown that Latin education was popular in the East and, more importantly, that prosopographical evidence proves that a cultural assimilation

[117] Greatrex, "Lawyers and Historians in Late Antiquity," 148-61.
[118] Alan Cameron, "The Roman Friends of Ammianus," *Journal of Roman Studies* 54 (1964): 15-28.

was taking place. Ammianus' choice of writing in the Latin language must be examined in the context of this trend.

It is interesting to learn that whereas a profound knowledge of philosophy was restricted to an intellectual elite, the majority would acquire an acquaintance with philosophy from doxographies and anthologies. As I will argue in Chapter 1, Ammianus echoes this type of learning. Furthermore, Julian's experiences in Neoplatonic theurgy must have not been uncommon since we will see that Ammianus reflects a good knowledge of this doctrine in one of his few digressions on philosophy. Concerning the impact of legal studies, I have shown how the professionalization of the law played an essential role in the educational landscape. Libanius complains about how his students abandon rhetorical studies at Antioch to study law at Rome or Beirut. One may wonder whether Ammianus could be an illustration of this phenomenon: a specialized knowledge of the law would provide a guarantee for career advancement. In Chapter 5, we will examine the impact of judicial speeches on the *RG*.

I have included a section on the intellectual debate about how the traditional curriculum can be compatible with the needs of the Christian faith. In the next chapter, we will see how this discussion is echoed in Ammianus' strong criticism of Julian's decree that forbade Christian professors to teach.

Finally, I have placed Ammianus' history in the historiographical context of his age. Although I have here emphasized the distinctive features, the ways in which the *RG* is certainly a unique intellectual achievement, I have also stressed how there are some connections between the *RG* and other literary genres popular in the fourth century such as Christian hagiography.

1

BIOGRAPHY AND EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The traditional view regarding the birthplace of Ammianus is that he came from the city of Antioch. In recent years, however, several scholars have challenged this notion. The fact that each of these scholars proposes a different alternative for the historian's city of birth suggests that a systematic re-examination of the "evidence" is needed. Can we actually prove that Ammianus was born in a particular city of the East? If we cannot, it will be more reasonable to establish a broader context that would include several urban centres in the eastern half of the Empire.

Most of the scholars who previously studied Ammianus' life focused their attention on the historian's own work, the *Res Gestae*, and neglected the sort of broad historical picture I have included in the previous chapter. Only recently, Matthews, who argues that Antioch was the historian' place of birth, has employed a more ambitious scope, placing the historian within the social and cultural context of his time.[1] The shortcoming of Matthews' argumentation is, however, the fact that he does not pay much attention to the role of education in the career and work of Ammianus. While he fully recognizes the role of Antioch as an important city in shaping Ammianus' ambitions and future career, he says very little, if anything, about the educational environment that produced individuals such as Libanius and John Chrysostom. Another scholar who has

[1] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 67-80.

explored some aspects of Ammianus' background is T. D. Barnes. He suggests that Ammianus was raised as a Christian and that he eventually apostatized.[2] Nevertheless, we again need to comprehend the actual meaning of Barnes' thesis by analyzing the cultural context. What did "being raised as a Christian" really mean in the fourth century?

In this chapter, I will attempt to offer a detailed analysis of Ammianus' background, including discussions on the date and place of birth, social class, linguistic landscape, curriculum, and the education of a *protector domesticus*. By considering all these elements, I will examine what we can actually know about Ammianus' life within the context of both his social and cultural environment. The main objective of this chapter is to establish the background that shaped Ammianus as an author.

1. DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH

Scholars have fully analyzed a passage from the *RG*, 16.10.21, as the main biographical data revealing Ammianus' approximate date of birth.[3] The content of this passage can be summarized as follows. In 357, the emperor Constantius summoned Ursicinus to the court in Sirmium to discuss the situation on the eastern frontier (16.10.21). Ursicinus had been *magister equitum per orientem* since 349 (18.6.2) and, as

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[2] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 79-94.

[3] León Dautremer, *Ammien Marcellin: Étude d'histoire littéraire* (Lille: Le Bigot frères, 1889), 7; Jean Gimazane, *Ammien Marcellin, sa vie et son œuvre* (Toulouse: Edourad Privat, 1889), 23. These two scholars suggest 335 as Ammianus' date of birth. Thompson suggests the years 325-30. See *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, 1. L. Dillemann argues that the link between biography and work provides the key to establish a precise date of birth. Book 14, which inaugurates a more detailed historical narrative, deals with events of the year 354, when Ammianus first appears in the narrative as protector of Ursicinus. Dillemann proposes 335: the historian would have been 19 in 354, the year of his military debut. However, Dillemann does not contemplate the possibility that Ammianus could have joined the army in his early twenties. See "Ammien Marcellin et le pays de l'Euphrate et du Tigre," *Syria* 38 (1961): 90-91. The most comprehensive analysis of this passage is given by Matthews. He concludes that Ammianus was 22 or 23 when he became *protector* in 350. See *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 76-77.

I will explain in section 6, he was probably responsible for Ammianus' entrance into the army as a *protector domesticus*. After some deliberations at the court, Ursicinus and his officers were sent back to the eastern frontier. Ursicinus kept his former rank as the supreme commander of the troops; the older officers were promoted to the rank of tribunes (*provectis e consortio nostro ad regendos milites natu maioribus*) whereas the younger *protectores*, including Ammianus, were ordered to follow their commander, *adulescentes eum sequi iubemur* (16.10.21).

According to the traditional classification based on both civic and military duties, the term *adulescens* referred to the period between the end of childhood, or *pueritia*, and matured youth, or *iuventus*, the time when the individual started public life. Thus, *adulescens* would define the period between 17 and 30 years of age.[4] As B. D. Shaw argues, occasionally the *adulescentia* could be prolonged until the mid-30s and even until the 40s if the son was still dependent on his father.[5] Ammianus provides us with further information when he calls Julian *adulescens primaevus* in 356, when the future emperor was only 24 (16.1.5). Therefore, we can reasonably suggest that Ammianus was not older than 30 in 357.[6] Since, as I pointed out above, Ammianus held the rank of *domesticus* through Ursicinus' recommendation, it would be unlikely that Ammianus joined the army before Ursicinus had become commander of the East in 349. Ammianus, therefore, joined Ursicinus sometime between 349 and 354, the year in which Ammianus appears in the *RG* performing the duties of *protector domesticus* with Ursicinus in Nisibis,

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[4] Augustine crossed the frontier between adolescence and youth at the age of 30. Augustine *Confessions* 7.1.1 (ed. and trans. Watts).

[5] Brent D. Shaw, "The Family in Late Antiquity," *Past and Present* 115 (May 1987): 40-41.

[6] Matthews reached the same conclusion, although he does not mention Ammianus' use of the term *adulescens*. Matthews bases his argument on the odd assumption that one became a tribune in his early thirties. However, there is no solid evidence proving that all men were promoted at the same age. See *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 77.

Mesopotamia (14.9.1). As Matthews has convincingly argued, it is possible to establish the precise date Ammianus joined the rank of *protectores*. The ceremony of 'adoration of the Purple' was an essential part in the admission to the rank of *protector*. The candidate swore loyalty to the emperor by kissing the edge of the imperial purple robe. The emperor Constantius was in the East until the late summer of 350, after which he moved west to campaign against Magnentius. Consequently, it is reasonable to claim that Ammianus became *protector* in 350, following Ursicinus' promotion the previous year.[7] Considering that the minimum age of conscription was 19 at that time,[8] and that Ammianus was not more than 30 in 357, as I mentioned above, he was born sometime between 328 and 331. In this chapter, we will eventually see how the fact that Ammianus joined the rank of *protectores* when he was only between 19 and 22 years old says much about the historian's social status.

Ammianus was a Greek. Aside from the explicit statement of the epilogue, in which Ammianus calls himself *Graecus* (31.16. 9), the historian refers to himself as a Greek speaker in numerous passages of the *RG*.[9] It had been traditionally assumed that Ammianus was born at Antioch. The claim is mainly based on a letter of the Antiochene orator Libanius addressed to a certain "Marcellinus."[10] In this letter, written in 392,[11] the orator congratulates Marcellinus for his successful recitation of parts of his work in

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[7] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 77.
[8] *Codex Theodosianus* 7.13.1(ed. and trans. Pharr).. See Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 616.
[9] The *RG* contains 31 passages with Greek words. Frequently, the historian uses the first person (singular or plural) when citing these Greek words. These passages can be divided into two main categories. In the first group, Ammianus includes a Greek translation or version, mostly because the author implies that he is unable to supply the right Latin term: 14.11.8; 17.4.17-23, 7.11; 18.6.22; 19.8.11; 20.3.4, 9, 10, 11; 21.1.8; 22.8.33, 9.7, 15.14, 29; 23.4.10, 6.20; 25.2.5; 26.1.1, 8. In the second group, Ammianus supplies Greek quotations: 15.8.17; 21.2.2, 14.4; 23.6.62; 25.4.17; 29.1.33, 2.25; 31.1.5, 14.8. To these two categories we must add two cases where the historian echoes local toponyms: 22.8.17, 41.
[10] *Epistulae* 1063 (ed. Foerster).
[11] Otto Seeck, *Der Briefe des Libanius* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1906), 202.

Rome, encouraging him to continue the composition since his fame would also bring glory to their city, Antioch. Consequently, scholars have identified the recipient of this letter with the historian.[12] This view, however, has been challenged in the past years.[13]

Overall, the identification of Antioch as Ammianus' place of birth is based on the content of Libanius' letter and the interpretation of certain passages in the *RG*. Is this evidence sufficient to establish that the historian came from Antioch? Libanius' letter to "Marcellinus" does not actually prove that Ammianus was from Antioch. A close examination of the text of the letter shows that there is nothing in its content and form that can identify the recipient with the historian. There are conflicting interpretations about what the letter says, and even about the tone Libanius is using to address its recipient. Matthews emphasizes as an extraordinary coincidence the fact that the letter mentions literary recitations taking place when Ammianus was completing his work between 391 and 392.[14] Nevertheless, this does not necessarily prove that Ammianus was at Rome in those years. He could have been composing his history somewhere else. As regards those passages in the *RG* that presumably connect Ammianus with Antioch, we still need to assess their actual significance.[15] It has not been confidently proved that Ammianus knew Syriac. He could have learnt what place-names meant simply by serving in the region. Concerning his familiarity with the area, one would expect an officer such as Ammianus, who served in espionage missions, to have the necessary geographical knowledge of the region. This explains how he found his way back to Antioch across the

[12] For a comprehensive defence of the traditional identification of the recipient with the historian see Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 8, n. 1; 78-80; "The Origin of Ammianus," *Classical Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (1994): 252-69; Guy Sabbah, "Ammien Marcellin, Libanius, Antioch et la date des derniers livres des *Res gestae*," *Cassiodorus* 3 (1997): 89-116.
[13] See Appendix 1.
[14] Matthews, "The Origin of Ammianus," 254.
[15] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 44; 55-57; 69, "The Origin of Ammianus," 255-57; Sabbah, "Ammien Marcellin," 97-107.

desert following the capture of Amida. That Ursicinus owned a house in Antioch does not mean that he was from there. The argument about Ammianus returning to Antioch after the fall of Amida and the Persian campaign merely emphasizes the importance of this city as a military base in the East. Antioch was the place where scattered elements of the army went to recollect and re-form their units. Similarly, the three passages that Sabbah mentions do not prove anything either. Ammianus echoes a local story about how the Caesar Gallus ventured at night around the inns and street corners of the city asking in Greek what they thought of the Caesar (14.1.9). Concerning the destruction of the temple of Daphne, the historian inserts a local rumour (*rumore levissimo*) containing precise details about the real cause of the fire: the philosopher Asclepiades inadvertently started the fire, not the Christians as the official version had claimed (22.13.2-3). Finally, Ammianus retells an old story that contains an unmistakable local flavour. In the time of the emperor Gallienus, the Persians often raided Syria. On one occasion, the people of Antioch were attending a theatre performance when the wife in the mime suddenly broke the spectators' silence by exclaiming: "Is it a dream, or are the Persians here?" The spectators scattered in all directions in an attempt to escape the rain of Persian arrows. The city was sacked and many died. Mareades, an Antiochene who had betrayed the city to the Persians, was burned at the stake (23.5.2-3). While the story of Mareades' treachery is recorded in other writers, the colourful details about the shock of the people in the theatre and the execution of Mareades are only told by two other Antiochene sources: Libanius and John Malalas.[16] However, Sabbah's examples are not entirely convincing. Someone else could have told Ammianus the stories about Gallus wandering around at night and the fire in the temple of Daphne. In addition, Ammianus could have

[16] Sabbah, "Ammien Marcellin," 97-107.

read about that theatrical anecdote announcing the invasion of the Persians. Others authors might have also recorded this anecdote apart from Libanius and Malalas.

Consequently, we should not base our analysis of Ammianus' early background on something that cannot be proved confidently. What the text of the *RG* clearly reveals is that Ammianus had strong ties with the city of Antioch, which does not necessarily mean he was born there. For instance, Themistius was born in Paphlagonia, but he is considered to have his strongest ties to Constantinople. More importantly, the place of birth is not crucial to establishing the educational background of an individual in antiquity. For students with financial means, it was common to spend several years in Antioch or Alexandria and then a few more years in Athens or Constantinople. They were expected to undertake rhetorical and philosophical studies under several professors. For instance, St. Basil began his studies at Caesarea, then went on to Constantinople, and then to Athens. In the introduction, I also mentioned the case of other of Ammianus' contemporaries who went to different cities to complete their grammatical and rhetorical studies.

2. THE SOCIAL CLASS

A passage from the *RG* reveals Ammianus' high social status. Shortly before the fall of Amida, Ammianus along with two companions successfully escaped from the city. After travelling on foot for ten miles, Ammianus states that he was exhausted since as a "man of breeding" he was unused to walking: *incedendi nimietate iam superarer ut insuetus ingenuus* (19.8.6). This English translation of the Latin *ingenuus* is justified by

the historian's use of the term in a previous passage. As Ursicinus and Ammianus were leaving Nisibis, Ammianus stopped to take a child back to the city. It seems that the historian was taken in by the high social status of the child. He had a well-bred appearance and wore a necklace indicating his nobility: *liberalis formae puerum torquatum, (ut coniectabamus) octennem, in aggeris medio vidimus heiulantem, ingenui cuiusdam filium (ut aiebat)* (18.6.10).

As regards Ammianus' specific social class, scholars are divided. Was the historian part of the Antiochene curial class? Or, did he come from the military elite? W. Ensslin noted the significance of the solidarity that Ammianus shows with the curial class when its privileges were threatened by Julian's legislation.[17] Ensslin argues that this shows that Ammianus not only belonged to that class, but also that he was pressed by the new regulations.[18] This scholar sustains his thesis with three passages of the *RG*:

Nor did he at so critical a time disregard the interests of private persons, but he gave ears to their suits and disputes, especially those of the senators of the free towns, whom he was much inclined to favour, and unjustly invested many of them with high public office. (21.12.23)

But, although such conduct was laudable and worthy of imitation by good rulers, it was on the contrary hard and censurable that under his rule anyone who was sought by the *curiales*, even though protected by special privileges, by length of service in the army, or by proof that he was

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[17] For the decline and end of curial government in Late Antiquity, see Bryan Ward-Perkins, "The Cities," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 13, *The Late Empire, A.D. 337-425*, ed. Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 373-82. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City*, 104-36.

[18] W. Ensslin, *Zur Geschichtschreibung und Weltanschauung des Ammianus Marcellinus* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1923), 5-6. The recurrence of the same legislation to reduce the privileges of the *Curia* proves that the central government failed to control and strengthen local governments. As the number of both levies and taxes increased, they were increasingly difficult to collect. In view of this, the most powerful members of the councils sought the exemption, which often became hereditary. The members with fewer resources had to deal with the municipal duties. These were of two sorts: the civic duties, such as the organization of the Games, and the underwriting of imperial taxes. See Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 737-57. For the burdens of a decurion see Libanius *Orationes* 25.43 (ed. Foerster).

wholly ineligible by birth for such a position, could with difficulty obtain full justice; so that many of them through fear bought immunity from annoyance by secret and heavy bribes. (22.9.12)

And also it was almost unbearable that in the municipal towns he unjustly allowed persons to be made members of the councils, who, either as foreigners, or because of personal privileges of birth, were wholly exempt from such assemblies. (25.4.21)

Actually, the real aim of Julian's legislation was to distribute municipal responsibilities more evenly by increasing membership in the *curia*. It seems that the emperor had to fight against a large part of the Antiochene *curia* that wanted to evade their curial obligations by enlisting new members who were unqualified for the position. Thus, a law dated at Antioch on September 1st, 362, stated that all the new enrolments in the *curia* from this date must be annulled, except in the cases of the sons of *curiales* and members of the lower classes who possessed the amount of property required.[19] In his lampoon against the Antiochenes, Julian criticizes the *curia* because, instead of enlisting members of the rich classes, they would seize a pauper in the market and appoint him *curialis*.[20] Ammianus must have known the actual political circumstances compelling Julian to pass this legislation. The historian, however, simplifies the matter, merely stating that Julian's actual purpose was to ingratiate himself with certain members of the *curia*: *litesque audiens controversas maxime municipalium, ad quorum favorem propensio*...(21.12.23). Concerning the second passage quoted above, Ensslin argues that it is very plausible that Ammianus thought that his position as a *protector domesticus* was not an absolute guarantee to escape from his obligations in the local government. The

[19] *Codex Theodosianus* 12.1.53 (ed. and trans. Pharr). See Roger Pack, "Ammianus Marcellinus and the *Curia* of Antioch," *Classical Philology* 48, no. 2 (1953): 80-81.
[20] Julian *Misopogon* 368ab (ed. and trans. Wright).

reference to his own circumstances is: *licet privilegiis et stipendiorum numero et originis penitus alienae firmitudine* (22.9.12).[21] A law of 349 confirms that the imperial administration made numerous efforts to prevent *curiales* from joining the army as a way to get exemption from municipal duties.[22] According to this legislation, those who had joined the corps of *protectores domestici* or other units in order to avoid curial obligations should be sent back to the *curia*, unless they had been in the army a minimum of five years.[23] Libanius is also a good source for an insight into the chaotic situation of the *curia*. The orator describes the practice of corruption and patronage in order to avoid the duties in the *curia*. The *curia* itself was actually unable to enforce the law, generating a constant tension between the local government and the governor, who often had to use flogging to apply the law.[24] E. A. Thompson has supplied other instances revealing Ammianus' positive attitude towards members of the *curia*. One example is Craugasius, a *curialis* from Nisibis whose fortunes Ammianus narrates at length.[25] It is also noteworthy that Ammianus does not hesitate to support the *curia* on two occasions when the imperial power, first with Gallus and afterwards with Julian, decided to intervene to reduce food prices (14.7.2; 22.14.1-2).[26] Nevertheless, sympathy for the "hardships" of the Antiochene *curia* does not automatically make Ammianus a member of this class. As

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[21] Ensslin, *Zur Geschichtschreibung*, 5.
[22] *Codex Theododosianus* 12.1.52 (ed. and trans. Pharr).
[23] For more legislation addressing the same problem, see *Codex Theodosianus* 12.1.37, 38, 43, 45 (ed. and trans. Pharr).
[24] Libanius *Orationes* 48.9 (ed. and trans. Norman).
[25] About Craugasius, 18.10.1, 3; 19.9.3, 5, 6; 20.6.1. For other members of the curia, 25.9.3; 27.7.6; 28.6.4, 10, 18; 29.2.27. See Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, 2.
[26] Ibid., 81.

Fornara argues, the references to the order are easily justified as part of the historical narrative, and they merely show solidarity with its members.[27]

Matthews and Barnes suggest that Ammianus belonged to a family that had risen above the curial class. They argue that his family was probably from the military elite.[28] This is indeed a more reasonable conclusion. As R. I. Frank explains, the majority of *protectores domestici* were the sons of high-ranking officers.[29] As a member of the military elite, Ammianus would have had the necessary connections to enter the army as a *protector domesticus* when he was still in his early twenties.[30] A law issued by Valentinian reinforces the relevance of family connections for future *protectores domestici*: sons and other relatives of *protectores domestici* could enroll in the corps when still too young for active service.[31]

3. AMMIANUS' BILINGUALISM

First, we must examine what the language of the *RG* tells us about Ammianus' bilingualism. Linguistic studies of the *RG* reveal the existence of both terms and grammatical constructions derived from Greek. Indeed, Norden stated that Ammianus "thinks in Greek."[32] Additionally, Ammianus' Latin sometimes does not reflect the

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[27] Charles W. Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus I: The Letter of Libanius and Ammianus' Connection with Antioch," *Historia* 41, no. 3 (1992): 340-44; Libanius *Orationes* 49.3 (ed. and trans. Norman).

[28] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 78-80; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 59.

[29] Richard Ira Frank, *Scholae Palatinae: The Palace Guards in the Later Roman Empire* (Rome: American Academy, 1969), 73.

[30] Gimazane had even suggested that the historian was the son of the Marcellinus who was *comes Orientis* in 349. See *Ammien Marcellin*, 24-27.

[31] *Codex Theodosianus* 6.24.2 (ed. and trans. Pharr). Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 79.

[32] Eduard Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa: Vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Bis in die Zeit der Renaissance*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1958), 648.

subtleties and particular connotations common among Latin speakers. For instance, in his study of the linguistic history of *dies*, Fraenkel explains how the historian almost always uses the masculine when accompanied by an attribute. This fact, Fraenkel argues, does not show a normal usage of the language, but probably a rule learnt at school of the type described by Servius: *"dies" autem si feminino genere ponatur, tempus significant,...si masculino, ipsum diem.*[33] Furthermore, a number of loan-shifts have also been detected. As a user of a second language Ammianus introduces into words of that language, Latin, new meanings derived from Greek terms.[34] More recently, Barnes has used several nineteenth-century linguistic studies of Ammianus to show how the Greek language and culture had a decisive impact on the *RG*.[35] Likewise, J. den Boeft argues that Ammianus' competence in Greek is superior to his knowledge of Latin, recognizing, however, that Ammianus' Graecism should also be judged within the stylistic trends and cultural context of the period.[36]

Most of the studies quoted above emphasize the oddities of Ammianus' style, justifying these linguistic idiosyncrasies as a direct result of the influence of Greek. The result of Frankel's analysis, moreover, suggests that other cultural factors may have also played a role in shaping Ammianus' use of Latin. How about the impact of Latin as a language studied in the East? The examination of the educational environment should play a part in the study of the language of the *RG* since Ammianus' Latin has an artificial style almost completely detached from the spoken language. In spite of his many years

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[33] E. Fraenkel, "Das Geschlecht von *dies*," *Glossa* 8 (1917): 26-68.
[34] See H. Schickiger, *Die Gräcismen bei Ammianus* (Nikolsburg: K. K. Staats-Gymnasiums, 1897); J. den Boeft, Daniël den Hengst and H. C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus XX* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1987), 152.
[35] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 55-78.
[36] See J. den Boeft, "Ammianus graecissans?" in *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus*, ed. J. den Boeft, Daniël den Hengst and H. C. Teitler (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1992), 9-12.

spent in the army, the impact of the *sermo castrensis* on the *RG* is rather small.[37] In addition, the study of the language of the *RG* must also include the historian's use of literary models as well as an examination of contemporary styles. As Hagendahl has argued, Ammianus' style can be defined as a combination of Ciceronian abundance with Tacitean *varietas* and *inconcinnitas*.[38] MacMullen has explained the stylistic excesses and abuse of synonyms in the *RG* as a reflection of the overwhelming role of rhetoric in shaping the obscure language of fourth-century legislation. Indeed, the impact of the language of Law went beyond the legal environment "...scholars interested in military history are exasperated by his use of *numerus, cohors,* and *turma* simply for variety, applied indifferently to all sorts of troop units."[39] Fornara has successfully shown that Ammianus reveals a profound knowledge of Latin literature whereas his quotations from the Greek are rather conventional.[40] We also need to be careful when analyzing the so-called "Graecisms" in Ammianus' work. Recently, Adams has convincingly argued that some of Ammianus' alleged lexical "Graecisms" had already been employed in literary Latin. For instance, explains Adams, the metaphorical use of *supercilium* (of the bank of the river) at 14.2.9 is not a "Graecism" but this particular use had already a history in Latin literature. Moreover, continues Adams, later Latin and Greek developed along similar lines, including syntactic changes.[41]

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[37] Giovanni Battista Pighi, *Studia Ammianea* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1935), 65ff.

[38] Harald Hagendahl, "Studia Ammianea," (Ph.D. diss., Uppsala, 1921); "De abundatia sermonis Ammianei," *Eranos* 22 (1924): 161-216.

[39] R. MacMullen, "Roman Bureaucratese," *Traditio* 18 (1962): 365; Jones, *The Later Roman Empire,* vol. 1, 388; C. M. Kelly, "Later Roman Bureaucracy: Going through the Files," in *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World,* ed. Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 161-76.

[40] Charles W. Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus II: Ammianus' Knowledge and Use of Greek and Latin Literature," *Historia* 41, no. 4 (1992): 420-38.

[41] Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 464-67.

As regards the literary style itself, recent studies show that the historian overall relies on the narrative structure of previous historians such as Caesar, Sallust, and Livy. As A. Debru argues, despite the use of long periods and the systematic presence of numerous ablative absolutes, Ammianus echoes the compositional techniques of other Roman historians: "Ammien a trouvé dans la période narrative, de facture classique, un instrument de narration et d'analyse façonné par ses prédécesseurs et adapté à son projet."[42] M. L. W. Laistner observes that Ammianus' Latin style could be compared with the style of Late Antique authors whose mother language was Latin: "One need only turn to the prose writings of Sidonius, Avitus, or Ennodius, to see a similarly ornate, overloaded manner of expression and a vocabulary largely poetical."[43] Further, other studies confirm that Ammianus' prose contains many features of the literary style of late antique Latin. What some scholars have viewed as odd grammatical constructions can be easily explained by the literary fashions of the period.[44]

It seems logical to look at Ammianus' effort to construct a contemporary Latin style within the context of Latin instruction in the East. As explained in the introductory chapter, knowledge of both Latin and Greek was fairly spread in the East, particularly among those who wished to enter the imperial administration or the army. Further,

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[42] A. Debru, "La phrase narrative d'Ammien Marcellin," *Revue de philologie, de littérature et d'histoire anciennes* 66 (1992): 287.

[43] M. L. W. Laistner, "Ammianus Marcellinus," in *The Greater Roman Historians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1947), 148.

[44] Fontaine and Roberts have examined Ammianus' work from a literary perspective, concluding that there are a number of stylistic characteristics in the *RG* that perfectly match the style of late antique Latin, particularly the language of poetry. See Jacques Fontaine, "Unité et diversité du melange des genres et des tons chez quelques écrivans latins de la fin du IVe siècle: Ausone, Ambroise, Ammien," in *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l'antiquité tardive en Occident: Huit exposés suivis de discussions*, ed. Alan Cameron and Manfred Fuhrmann (Genève: Foundation Hardt, 1977), 425-82; "Le style d'Ammien Marcellin et l'esthéthique théodosienne," in *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus*, ed. J. den Boeft, Daniël den Hengst, and H. C. Teitler (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1992); Michael Roberts, "The Treatment of Narrative in Late Antique Literature: Ammianus Marcellinus (6.10), Rutilius Namatianus and Paullinus of Pella," *Philologus* 132, no. 2 (1988): 181-95.

prosopographical evidence indicates that some of Ammianus' Greek contemporaries were able to compose literary works in Latin. Therefore, in view of the linguistic sophistication Ammianus achieved in the *RG*, it is very likely that the historian received instruction in Latin. Ammianus may have followed the path of those who interrupted their studies in Greek rhetoric in order to start Latin and Roman law. Admittedly, it is theoretically plausible that Ammianus was self-taught and that his Latin skills were therefore acquired outside the environment of formal education. However, it is also worth exploring whether an examination of the text of the *RG* reveals the application of rhetorical rules learnt at school. In addition, we also need to evaluate the impact of Latin writers on the *RG*. Are these borrowings second hand? Do they reflect a profound knowledge of the Latin curriculum?

4. AMMIANUS' CURRICULUM

4.1. The Education of the Elite.

It is very likely that Ammianus, as a member of the military elite, received the benefits of a rhetorical education. Through the narrative of the *RG*, we can occasionally detect some passages where Ammianus subtly echoes the cultural prejudices of the upper classes. As a member of the Graeco-Roman intellectual elite, the historian consciously neglects to include any mention of other languages aside from Latin and Greek. According to Ammianus, the *protector* Antoninus, a Roman from Syria who defected to the Persians, was fluent in two languages: *utriusque linguae litterae sciens* (18.5.1). Although it emerges from the *RG* that Antoninus knew Persian (18.7.10), and plausibly

Syriac, the historian actually means that the *protector* knew Greek and Latin. As Matthews indicates, Ammianus refers to Antoninus' knowledge of these two languages in the context of his espionage in the eastern provinces, for which most of the documentation was in Latin.[45] Similarly, Ammianus does not mention Musonianus' knowledge of Aramaic when he praises his linguistic skills: *facundia sermonis utriusque* (15.13.1).[46] Here, the historian could have only meant Greek and Latin, the languages of eloquence in Graeco-Roman culture.

Confidence in his privileged education may have inspired Ammianus to base the criticism of certain individuals on their lack of training in the *artes liberales*. He characterizes the prefect Orfitus as possessing a specialized knowledge but lacking a literary education: *vir quidem prudens, et forensium negotiorum oppido gnarus, sed splendore liberalium doctrinarum minus quam nobilem decuerat institutus* (14.6.1). Nevitta, consul in 363, is: *nec splendore nec usu nec gloria horum similem...contra inconsummatum et subragestem* (21.10.8).[47] We also have the case of Maximius, *praefectus annonae* and later *praefectus praetorio* of Gaul (373-4), who pursued his career *post mediocre studium liberalium doctrinarum defensionemque causarum ignobilem* (28.1.6). The emperor Valens is described as *inconsummatus et rudis,* being unable to comprehend the content of an oracle based on three verses of the *Odyssey* (31.14.8). Ammianus even dares to criticize a certain group within the Roman aristocracy. They have their libraries shut up like tombs, the historian writes, and they are

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[45] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 71

[46] For Musonianus' knowledge of Aramaic, see Jan Willem Drijvers, "Ammianus Marcellinus 15.13.1-2: Some Observations on the Career and Bilingualism of Strategius Musonianus," *Classical Quarterly* 46 (1996): 532-37.

[47] The noun *splendor* is closely connected with *nobilitas*; for instance, in *ubi desudat nobilitas omnis et splendor* (23.6.83), and *splendoreque nobilium circumdatus potestatum* (27.6.5).

only interested in writers like Juvenal and Marius Maximus (14.6.18; 28.4.14). Indeed, through this type of criticism, the historian seems to echo the ancient conviction that *doctrina* and *mores* are inseparable. Confidence in his privileged educational background may have also played a role in the historian's decision to write an ambitious historical work in the old style. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, the *RG* represents a great contrast to the historical summaries that were popular in the fourth century: the brief Latin epitomes of Eutropius, Aurelius Victor and Festus.

Commenting on the length of Ammianus' education, Fornara states: "Ammianus was *domesticus protector* at a stage in life when Themistius, Libanius, Eunapius—truly learned men of the time—were solidifying their knowledge of the classics."[48] Unfortunately, Fornara does not provide details about the educational experience of those contemporaries of Ammianus. One may ask, for instance, at what age the Greek student was supposed to solidify his knowledge of the classics. As explained in the previous chapter, it is difficult to offer a standard rule for the duration of the instruction on rhetoric. Furthermore, since the Greek student normally started his rhetorical studies at an early age, as compared to his Latin counterpart, Ammianus may already have had a solid knowledge of rhetoric when he joined the army at the age of 19 or later on. For instance, the fact that John Chrysostom ended his rhetorical studies at the age of 18 did not prevent him from becoming one of the most skillful orators of his age.

4.2. The Impact of the Curriculum on the *Res Gestae*.

4.2.3. Greek and Latin Authors.

[48] Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus II," 421.

In the introduction, I briefly referred to what fourth-century authors considered the foundation of the Greek curriculum: Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Lysias, and Plato. Although Ammianus shows a good knowledge of Homer,[49] his citations of other Greek authors, including Greek historians and orators, are both superficial and second-hand. For instance, the historian only once mentions Herodotus: the Greek historian is the authority for the construction of the pyramids.[50] As Fornara argues, it was a standard procedure to cite Herodotus as the main source for a digression on Egypt. In fact, shows Fornara, Ammianus is actually echoing the account of Solinus.[51] Concerning the use of Thucydides, we have similar results. Ammianus only cites him on two occasions. First, the plague at Athens during the Peloponnesian War serves as an illustration for the account of the plague of Amida (19.4.4).[52] Second, Ammianus mentions Thucydides to recall a historical anecdote: the Athenians were the first to abandon the custom of bearing arms in civilian life (23.6.75).[53] Ammianus did not necessarily borrow this information from Thucydides' history. In fact, other authors of antiquity frequently cited these two events.[54] The treatment of other Greek sources is similar. The citations are sufficiently vague to suggest that Ammianus may have borrowed some of the references from other sources, including works written in Latin.[55] As regards Latin sources, Ammianus shows a

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[49] See Appendix 2.
[50] Herodotus 2.124 (ed. and trans. Godley).
[51] Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus II," 422.
[52] Thucydides 2.4.7-8 (ed. Jones and Powell).
[53] Thucydides 1.6.1-3 (ed. Jones and Powell)
[54] Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus II," 423.
[55] Hesiod (14.6.8); Plato (16.5.10; 22.14.5; 23.6.32; 25.4.2; 28.4.15; 30.4.3); Aristotle (17.7.11; 18.3.7; 21.1.12); Anaxagoras (17.7.11; 22.8.5; 22.16.22); Ptolemy (22.3.4; 22.8.10); Aratus (22.10.6; 25.4.19); Simonides (14.6.7); Timagenes (15.9.2) Democritus (16.5.1); Hermapion (17.4.17); Anaximander (17.7.12); Menander (21.14.4); Hermes Trimegistus (21.14.5); Apollonius of Tyana (21.14.5); Plotinus (21.14.5); Heraclitus (21.16.14); Eratosthenes (22.8.10); Hecataeus (22.8.10); Theopompus (22.9.7); Juba (22.15.8); Didymus Chalcenterus (22.16.16); Pythagoras (22.16.21); Polybius (24.2.16); Bacchylides (25.4.3); Meton (26.1.8); Euctemon (26.1.8); Hipparchus (26.1.8); Archimedes 26.1.8); Phrynichus (28.1.3-

good knowledge of authors such as Cicero[56] and Vergil.[57] Other Latin authors are occasionally cited or alluded.[58]

Overall, the way the historian explicitly borrows from Cicero can be compared with his citations from Homer. Regarding the other literary references, many of which are too general to be able to identify the original source, there are more allusions to Greek authors. This fact suggests that Ammianus wished to emphasize his Greek cultural heritage to the Roman audience.

Nevertheless, a careful examination of the text of the *RG* actually reveals that the most significant literary influence comes from Latin authors. Following the practice of most ancient writers, Ammianus often omits the names of his authorities. For instance, albeit unacknowledged, the presence of Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* is pervasive through the narrative of the *RG*.[59] Likewise, as I will show in chapter 4, the historian never states that he borrowed from two Ciceronian works, *De republica* and *Somnium*, to compose the digression on eclipses. More importantly, Ammianus shows great familiarity with the works of Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus. According to Owens, the historian echoes 70 phrases of Livy, a similar amount of Tacitus, and more of Sallust.[60] As Fornara convincingly argues, the historian borrows from these three historians to display a sophisticated system of verbal allusions, assuming from his Roman audience a profound knowledge of Latin historiography. These allusions certainly go beyond that range of

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4); Theognis (29.1.21); Demosthenes (30.1.23); Epicurus (30.4.3); Tisias (30.4.3); Georgias of Leontini (30.4.3); Isocrates (30.8.6).

[56] See Appendix 2.

[57] See Appendix 2.

[58] Cato (14.6.8; 15.12.14; 16.5.2); Sallust (15.12.6); Caesar (29.2.18); Lucilius (26.9.11); Terence (14.6.16); Plautus (15.13.3).

[59] See M. Hertz, "Aulus Gellius und Ammianus Marcellinus," *Hermes* 8 (1874): 257-302.

[60] E. E. L. Owens, "Phraseological Parallels and Borrowings in Ammianus Marcellinus from Earlier Latin Authors." (Ph.D. diss., London, Birkbeck College, 1958), 257-302.

erudite quotations we have seen above, such as those derived from Homer and Cicero. For example, the evocation of a passage from Livy[61] to describe the abandonment of Nisibis by Jovian (25.9.5) is just one out of many examples of an ambitious plan to integrate the narrative of the *RG* within the legacy of Latin historiography.[62]

It is now necessary to examine whether we can establish a connection between Ammianus' use of literary sources and the content of the traditional curriculum. Since Homer and Cicero were obligatory authors in the Greek and Latin curricula respectively, it is not surprising that Ammianus included so many citations from these writers. In the case of Cicero, there is abundant evidence that this author, along with Vergil, was always included in bilingual manuals used in the East.[63] It is unusual, however, that an ancient historian mentioned by name so many authors, offering a broad spectrum of Greek and Latin poets, historians and philosophers. As I previously explained by referring to the historian's use of Herodotus and Thucydides, many of these literary references are too general, often revealing their second-hand nature. For instance, in referring to Julian's military training (16.5.10), Ammianus cites Plato as the source of a saying that, in fact, is found as a verbatim quotation in a work of Cicero.[64] In the digression on earthquakes, Ammianus claims as sources Aristotle, Anaxagoras and Anaximander. If we carefully examine the text, however, we detect that some passages were probably taken from Latin sources. On the origin of the earthquakes themselves (17.7.11), Ammianus echoes what he claims to be Anaxagoras' explanation: "through the force of the winds, which penetrates the inner parts of the earth." Actually, this statement is found in the work of

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[61] Livy *De urbe condita* 1.29.4-5 (ed. and trans. Foster).
[62] Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus II," 427-38.
[63] Rochette, *Le latin dans le monde grec,* 165-210.
[64] Cicero *Epistulae ad Atticum* 5.15.3 (ed. and trans. Shackleton Bailey).

Diogenes Laertius.[65] A different theory is attributed to Anaximander (17.7.12): "when the earth dries up after excessive heat, or after soaking rainstorms, the air can violently penetrate the clefts being created by this extreme weather." Pliny the Elder mentions this explanation.[66] When digressing on the geography of Thrace and the Black Sea, specifically the areas of Querronesus and Aegospotami, the historian mentions how Anaxagoras predicted a rain of stones from heaven (22.8.5). Actually, this legendary event was well known in antiquity, being cited by Strabo and Pliny the Elder.[67] In the context of the digression on Egypt, Ammianus again mentions Anaxagoras as predicting a rain of stones and an earthquake (22.16.22).

Ammianus probably used encyclopedic summaries for the type of citations I previously enumerated. The use of this material was common in the fourth century. For instance, A. F. Norman has convincingly shown that this type of work was an essential part of Libanius' library. In the examination of Libanius' quotations, explains Norman, one must distinguish between his primary sources and the use of intermediaries such as collections of literary and popular proverbs. While Libanius' works clearly show that he used the texts of pivotal authors like Homer, Hesiod, Sophocles, and Euripides, many of his citations are also derived from compilations. References to Anacreon, Archilochus, Praxila, Simonides, and Stesichorus, are restricted to anecdotes or proverbs already collected by generations of subsequent writers.[68] Julian also read this sort of compilation. As I explained in the previous chapter, he must have used 'folding tablets' containing a selection of passages by Homer and Plato.

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[65] Diogenes Laertius 2.3 (ed. and trans. Hicks).
[66] Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.191 (ed. and trans. Rackham).
[67] Strabo 7.55 (ed. and trans. Jones). Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.149 (ed. and trans. Rackham).
[68] A. F. Norman, "The Library of Libanius," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 107 (1964): 158-75.

The way Ammianus quotes from Greek and Latin authors may reflect two different stages in the historian's education. He probably consolidated his knowledge of Homer in the early stages of his instruction in the Greek language and grammar. For example, Julian's early education suggests that this may not have been unusual. As explained in the introductory chapter, Julian acknowledged the influence of his tutor Mardonius in shaping his love for Greek literature, particularly Homer and Hesiod. Indeed, his acquaintance with these two authors had already started during his school years before beginning secondary education, or the school of the grammarian, at the age of 11.

Ammianus eventually began Latin studies, which were essential to enter the army as a high-rank officer at such an early age. This situation was not unusual in the East. As we have seen in the previous chapter, there is evidence that Latin instruction was available in eastern cities, including Antioch, where Libanius jealously, and hopelessly, defended the foundations of Greek oratory and Hellenic culture in general. In fact, many of his letters refer to Antiochene students who interrupted his rhetorical education to undertake Latin studies and Law in cities such as Rome and Beirut.

In the examination of how literary citations reflect the content of an education in both Greek and Latin, the cultural background of John the Lydian, the sixth-century Greek writer and bureaucrat from Philadelphia in Lydia, represents an interesting case for comparison with Ammianus' own experience. Latin had a decisive role in their respective careers, although it is necessary to note that, despite the efforts of the Latin-speaking Justinian to extend the use of Latin in the East, the official language of the empire had lost its past relevance in the sixth century. As T. F. Carney argues, the fact that John's

modest knowledge of Latin was highly regarded suggests that proficiency in this language was unusual in the intellectual circles of the East.[69] Contrary to Ammianus' experience, John the Lydian chose to write in Greek because his educational background and cultural environment was predominantly Greek. This fact is perfectly illustrated by the way he quotes Greek and Latin sources. The Greek authors mentioned in John's works, which were regarded by his contemporaries as the ones whom "every school-boy knows," are: Homer (only the *Iliad*), Sophocles, Euripides, Thucydides, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, Arrian, Cassius Dio, and Ptolemy. Concerning Latin authors, they are as follows: Vergil, Livy, Apuleius, Lucan, and Caesar. As Carney argues, John's knowledge of Latin literature is actually rather modest. In general, his citations are based on second-hand acquaintance with their works. For instance, the references to Livy come from a summary, probably in a Greek translation. Furthermore, it is very plausible that John only read parts of these writings. The citations from Vergil, for example, come from books 6, 7 and 8 only of the *Aeneid*.[70] In conclusion, Carney's study clearly reveals that John's citation of authors supposedly taught at school strongly depends on his ability to read Greek and Latin. Although John's citations of Latin authors outnumber Greeks for some periods, such as the first century B.C. and the first and fourth centuries A.D., these references do not necessarily imply that the author read all those works.[71] Curiously, we see the opposite pattern in Ammianus' system of citations. As shown above, his citations of Greek authors clearly outnumber the Latin references. However, aside from the Homeric allusions, many of these citations taken from Greek philosophers, historians,

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[69] T. F. Carney, *Bureaucracy in Traditional Society: Romano-Byzantine Bureaucracies Viewed from Within*, Book 2 (Lawrence, Kans: Coronado Press), 47.
[70] Carney, *Bureaucracy in Traditional Society*, Book 2, 48.
[71] Ibid., 61.

and poets, are second-hand, being borrowed from Latin compilations such as encyclopedic works of the type of Pliny's *Naturalis historia* and Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*. In contrast, Ammianus' profound knowledge of some Latin authors like Cicero, Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, and Aulus Gellius, reflects not only the impact of Latin instruction in the East but also the historian's good command of the language.

Lastly, the fact that John the Lydian only read certain books by some pivotal authors raises important questions about what was actually taught at schools in the East. For instance, in the writings of the sixth-century historian and panegyrist, Procopius, half of the allusions to Thucydides come from Book 1. Moreover, there is evidence that only the early books of Thucydides were taught at the school of Gaza in the sixth century.[72] Consequently, one must be cautious when defining the content of the basic curriculum in Late Antiquity. Ammianus' failure to make more use of Thucydides in the *RG* may be explained by the possibility that the Greek historian was not read in its entirety at some schools in the East.

4.2.4. Philosophy.

One may wonder whether Ammianus also engaged in the study of philosophy after completing his training in rhetoric. In fact, philosophy was not part of the curriculum in the *studia liberalia*, but an additional course followed only by the most gifted students.[73] Was the historian among these talented pupils? Developing a theory first suggested by M. Büdinger, Barnes has argued that Libanius encountered Ammianus

[72] See Geoffrey Greatrex, "Stephanus, the Father of Procopius of Caesarea?" *Medieval Prosopography* 17, no. 1 (1996): 129, n. 9.
[73] See Introduction, n 48.

at Antioch, and referred to him as a philosopher.[74] The evidence is as follows. In a letter to his former students, Apollinaris and Gemellus, Libanius describes the bearer of this letter as an Ammianus who, although he is a soldier, can be counted among the philosophers for having imitated Socrates.[75] The letter can be dated in 360.[76] However, there are serious problems in this identification that need to be addressed. It is pure conjecture that Ammianus was at Antioch after the dismissal of Ursicinus. It is a likely possibility that cannot be proved. The fact that Libanius uses "Ammianus" in this letter takes us back to the scholarly controversy on Libanius' letter of 392. Libanius would have addressed the historian consistently. At least, one is not the historian and, probably, none of them is. In addition, the exact meaning of Libanius' words is not clear. Is he implying that this young Ammianus had composed some kind of philosophical treatise in the Platonic style? However, the language of this letter is rather rhetorical. Since the orator is contrasting the pragmatism of the army with the activities of the philosopher, the comparison with Socrates could simply refer to the intellectual inclination of this young officer. Nevertheless, it is still worth examining whether the text of the *RG* reveals that Ammianus may have received some sort of philosophical training.

The content of the *RG* does not show that Ammianus had any explicit preference for a philosophical system. Ammianus incidentally mentions two philosophical schools: the Academy (14.9.6) and the School of Zeno (15.9.9). Although the historian refers to eminent philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Anaxagoras and Democritus), he never discusses their ideas in detail. More interestingly, Ammianus occasionally introduces

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[74] Max Büdinger, *Ammianus Marcellinus und die Eigernart seines Geschtswerkes* (Vienna: In Commission bei Carl Gerold's Sohn, 1895), 9. Cf. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 61-62.
[75] Libanius *Epistulae* 233.4 (ed. Foerster).
[76] Seeck, *Die Briefe des Libanius*, 374. However, Seeck rejects the identification with the historian, ibid., 58.

ideas that either belong to the tradition of Roman religion or reflect a contemporary philosophical idiom. In some passages, the historian merely justifies his argumentation by the authority of the *theologi*.[77] On other occasions, he assumes that the reader is familiar with the philosophical terms he employs. Concerning the latter case, Camus has systematically described Ammianus' philosophical and religious ideas. The French scholar places Ammianus' thought in a contemporary context, attributing to him Neoplatonic and monotheistic ideas.[78] On the contrary, Rike has successfully argued that Ammianus's theology actually echoes the traditional pantheon.[79] Nevertheless, one of the passages of the *RG* cannot be interpreted using Rike's arguments (21.1.8). In this passage, Ammianus detaches himself from traditional theological stereotypes to reflect philosophical ideas that had a great impact on contemporary circles. He describes how the art of divination allows the individual to know "the spirit pervading all the elements," *elementorum omnium spiritus*. Therefore, through a careful observance of the ritual, the "elemental powers," *substantiales potestates*, provide the humans with the gift of prophecy as if from the veins of inexhaustible founts, *velut ex perpetuis fontium venis*. In this brief passage, Ammianus shows a great familiarity with a philosophical language that has its roots in Plotinus. The Latin translation of Plotinus' ὑπόστασις is *substantia*, from

[77] Usually, after a philosophical or theological excursus, Ammianus ends the argumentation by using the authority of the ancient theologians and poets who would supply the mythological background to illustrate the concept of Justice, the origin of natural catastrophes, the hierarchical status of the goddess Themis and the nature of the *numina*: 14.11.25; 17.7.12; 21.1.8; 21.14.13. But who are these poets and theologians? Aristotle talks about the school of Hesiod and the cosmologists who deal with the gods. Aristotle *Metaphysica* 1000a. 9-14; 1071b. 27-8 (ed. and trans. Tredennick and Armstrong). Cicero is more precise and gives the names of Orpheus, Musaeus, Hesiod and Homer. Cicero *De Natura Deorum* 1.15.40-1 (ed. and trans. Rackham).

[78] Pierre Marie Camus, *Ammien Marcellin: Témoin des courants culturels et religieux à la fin du IVe siècle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1967), 133-56.

[79] R. L. Rike, *Apex Omnium: Religion in the "Res Gestae" of Ammianus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 8-36.

which the adjective *substantialis* is derived. In his treatise *On the Three Hypóstases*,[80] Plotinus counters Plato's dualistic system by proposing different levels of reality that are an extension of the One, from which everything else would find its justification. The metaphor of the sun rays illustrates the idea of how it is actually possible to reach the perfect idea of the One through knowledge. More specifically, Ammianus echoes Iamblichus' contribution to this Neoplatonic tradition: Plotinus' mysticism (θεωρία) is replaced by magic (θεουργία). Julian admired Iamblichus and it is very likely that the intellectual circle of the emperor was Ammianus' inspiration to write this particular passage.

While philosophical ideas per se merely play a secondary role in the *RG*, Ammianus is greatly concerned about what type of role philosophers should play in the imperial administration. As R. L. Rike has argued at length, Ammianus mainly concentrates on the ethical role philosophers should perform within a program of pagan restoration.[81] Specifically, Ammianus defends a harmonious relationship between the *cultus deorum* performed by the priests and the knowledge of the philosophers, who should also project an ethical example. This is probably one of the reasons why the historian includes a philosophical education as one of Julian's virtues (16.5.6). But the problem arises when the philosophical discourse interferes in the practice of traditional religion. This occurs when the philosopher abandons the rational debate and is only concerned with priestly practices, such as divination. Undoubtedly, Ammianus assigns

[80] Plotinus *Enneades* 5.1 (ed. and trans. Armstrong, Henry, and Schwyzer).
[81] Rike, *Apex Omnium*, 69-86.

this negative role to Maximus, the personal friend and tutor of Julian.[82] And, as Rike rightly argues, Ammianus implicitly suggests that the failure of the Persian expedition is explained by the philosophers' interference in the role traditionally assigned to priests.[83]

Consequently, nothing in the text of the *RG* suggests that the historian was trained in philosophy. What the content of the *RG* shows is that, despite the limitations dictated by the conventions of the historical genre, Ammianus successfully manages to incorporate contemporary philosophical ideas as well as to voice a very strong opinion about the political role of philosophers within the administration of the empire.

5. A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION?

As I briefly discussed in the previous chapter, the content of the traditional curriculum was a subject of intense debate for many authors of the fourth century. Was the curriculum compatible with the foundations of the Christian faith? Indeed, many of Ammianus' contemporaries interpreted their educational experience in new ways. For instance, some viewed the concept of education as being linked to the idea of cultural identity. According to Libanius, being a Greek was defined by an education in Greek literature and rhetoric, including the practice of the traditional pagan religion. In contrast, some Christian authors challenged this restrictive definition of Hellenism by ignoring the religious element. In the context of this debate, it is worth inquiring whether the text of

[82] As an illustration, the historian severely criticizes Julian when the latter hugs Maximus in the senate of Constantinople: 22.7.3. Conversely, Ammianus praises Maximus' philosophical knowledge and his role as Julian's tutor. 29.1.42.
[83] Rike, *Apex Omnium*, 61-64.

the *RG* reveals information not only about Ammianus' attitude towards religion, but also about the possible influence of Christian teaching on his writing.

Overall, scholars agree that Ammianus was hostile toward Christianity, although there are different opinions regarding the degree of this animosity.[84] We do not find, however, a scholarly consensus concerning the role played by religion in the narrative of the *RG*. The traditional view is that Ammianus closely follows the convention of ancient historiography: the *RG* is a secular work written in the so-called grand style. Blockley and Matthews, among others, judge the allusions to the sphere of the divine as marginal. They argue that most passages dealing with religious matters, such as references to gods, omens, the role of fate, and the relevance of divination, are part of the rhetorical apparatus of traditional historiography. In other words, these references to religion, they explain, are not based on deep-rooted beliefs.[85] In relation to the historian's treatment of Christianity, some scholars argue that the conventions of the historical genre are reflected in what they define as a classicizing style that historians of Late Antiquity employ to avoid the use of the Christian idiom.[86]

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[84] For an account of the main views on Ammianus' approach to Christianity, see Edward David Hunt, "Christians and Christianity in Ammianus Marcellinus," *Classical Quarterly* 35 (1985): 187-88; Rike, *Apex Omnium*, 1-5.

[85] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 425ff. Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 5, 70, 105, 122, 176.

[86] Thus, Alan and Averil Cameron parallel Ammianus with the Byzantine historians Malchus of Philadelphia, Procopius, Agathias and Simocatta. The British scholars argue that as stylistic rules in classical historical writing prescribe the avoidance of technical terms, this fact is the only explanation why these Byzantine authors, though familiar with the Christian scene, use periphrasis when referring to anything related to the church. See "Christianity and Tradition in the Historiography of the Late Empire," *Classical Quarterly* 14 (1964): 316-28. In a recent historiograhical study of Procopius' work, A. Kaldellis has challenged this thesis, arguing that, for instance, Procopius' classicism goes beyond an affected imitation of previous authors like Thucydides. In fact, explains Kaldellis, Procopius manages to identify himself with the paradigms of classical thought. See Anthony Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 26-38.

A methodological problem immediately arises from the views briefly described above: one should not apply modern standards when examining the role of ancient religion in historiography. By definition, the traditional Graeco-Roman religion did not involve the strict set of beliefs requested by the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. For example, Ammianus' reaction against Julian's decree prohibiting Christian professors to teach can be interpreted as a defense of one of the features of paganism: anti-dogmatism (22.10.7; 25.4.20).[87] Put another way, the ancients often approached religion in a way that we would now qualify as superficial.

Nonetheless, any allusion of Ammianus to traditional religion, albeit brief and "half-digested", may contain broader cultural and political implications. Let us not forget that the *RG* is largely an isolated monument against other historical models such as those represented by Christian historiography. In fact, some scholars convincingly argue that religion plays a central role in the *RG*. Hunt and Sabbah emphasize the presence of pagan religion in the form of omens and fate.[88] As mentioned in the previous section, Rike explains how the *RG* contains a strong defense of the old Graeco-Roman polytheistic system. T. Harrison persuasively reinterprets Rike's thesis, further arguing that the fact that Ammianus' religious ideas sometimes look half-digested, or lacking philosophical reflection, does not necessarily imply that these religious allusions do not have an important role in the *RG*. According to Harrison, the references to Fortune, omens, oracles, and dreams, are not mere stylistic devices. Actually, Ammianus sees these religious elements as part of the moral interpretation of historical events. In addition,

[87] For a discussion of how Ammianus perfectly understood toleration as being essential to paganism, see J. J. O'Donnell, "The Demise of Paganism," *Traditio* 35 (1979): 45-88.
[88] Hunt, "Christians and Christianity," 187. Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin,* 548.

continues Harrison, the historian links the fate of emperors to the fate of the city of Rome and, more generally, to the destiny of the Empire.[89]

Although the *RG* clearly contains a defense of paganism, it is also worth exploring the possibility that Ammianus was originally a Christian. Barnes has recently argued that the historian was raised as a Christian but apostatized under the influence of Julian's program to return to traditional religion.[90] Barnes bases much of his argument on a linguistic analysis undertaken by Pighi some decades ago. According to Pighi, Ammianus unconsciously uses terms and modes of expression that belong to the Christian tradition.[91] Barnes acknowledges that Ammianus complies with the conventions of the historical genre: the historian keeps away from any sort of jargon such as theological terminology. He argues, however, that Ammianus uses the terms *presbyter, episcopus* and *ecclesia* without gloss or circumlocution. Concerning the ideological aspect, Barnes reveals that Ammianus attributes to Julian a type of chastity whose conception is exclusively Christian (25.4.2-3). He then concludes that since the *RG* contains numerous attacks against the Christian creed, Ammianus may have renounced his religion following the example of Julian.

I must raise two strong reservations against Barnes' thesis. First, the fact that Ammianus was familiar with Christian terminology does not necessarily mean that he was raised as a Christian. Christianity had been gradually gaining imperial support for almost a century by the time Ammianus composed the *RG*. For instance, Antioch, a city

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[89] Thomas Harrison, "*Templum Mundi Totius:* Ammianus and a Religious Ideal of Rome," in *The Late Roman World and Its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus,* ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and David Hunt (London: Routledge, 1999), 178-90.
[90] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 79-94.
[91] Giovanni Battista Pighi, "Ammianus Marcellinus," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, ed. 1950, 386-94.

that played a major role in the life of Ammianus, was predominantly Christian. The growing Christian presence in the spheres of power makes it understandable that Ammianus would be familiar with legal or theological terminology that had already become widespread. Second, the following question needs to be addressed: what did "to be raised as a Christian" really mean? While it is plausible that Ammianus was raised in the Christian faith, one may inquire whether Barnes also implies that Ammianus received a Christian education in terms of a formal curriculum.

As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, George of Cappadocia, later bishop of Alexandria, was responsible for Julian's secondary education during the latter's six-year stay at Macellum in Cappadocia. Bouffartigue has identified numerous verbal allusions to the scriptures in Julian's speech *Against the Galileans*, noting that he had received a solid religious instruction.[92] This is certainly a clear case of Christian teaching being reflected in a particular work. However, there is no solid evidence to suggest that Christian teaching ever materialized in the form of a curriculum in the fourth century. For instance, the Antiochene John Chrysostom was born in a Christian family or at least his mother was a Christian as he himself states.[93] He undertook his rhetorical education under the pagan orator Libanius. From John Chrysostom's own reminiscences and the testimony by Palladius, John's student and biographer, we know that he devoted himself to the study of the scriptures only after he had completed his rhetorical instruction. John had then fallen under the spell of Meletios the Confessor, who was in charge of a church of Antioch.[94] John's experience must have been quite common since an educational system especially

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[92] Bouffartigue, *L'Empereur Julien,* 156-70.
[93] Hohn Chrysostom *De sacerdotio* 1 (Migne, *Patrologia Cursus, series Graeca*). See Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 7.
[94] Ibid., 16.

designed for the Christian population did not exist. Indeed, the church showed some interest in implementing a curriculum for the elementary education of religious communities. However, apart from the religious orders, there is no evidence of the existence of an exclusively Christian curriculum.[95] We only know of Protogenes' initiative, a priest from Edessa who opened a school at Antinopolis during the reign of Valens.[96] Though Basil of Caesarea and John Chrysostom wished that the monastic communities also educated those who would not follow a religious life, the idea did not find an actual application.[97] Education was ultimately the responsibility of the father, and Christian parents would not hesitate to send their sons to a good pagan teacher such as Libanius, even though the rhetor's animosity against Christianity was well known.[98] This lack of an independent and serious curriculum is attested by the comment of Julian, who is confident that an education only based on the scriptures would make their students as ignoble as slaves.[99] Moreover, Julian's legislation against Christian professors seems to have been a decision caused by irrational fear, as Ammianus' criticism clearly reveals (22.10.7).

6. THE EDUCATION OF A *PROTECTOR DOMESTICUS*

Ammianus probably joined the corps of *protectores* through the influence of the *magister equitum* Ursicinus, under whose command Ammianus spent a great part of his

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[95] Basil of Caesarea and Jerome created a curriculum of elementary education that excluded pagan works. See Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 318 ff.
[96] Theodoret of Cyrrhus *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.18.8 (ed. Parmentier and Christian).
[97] Basil of Caesarea *Regulae brevius tractatae* 292. (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Graeca* 31.1079-1306); John Chrysostom *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae.* 3.18 (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Graeca* 47.319-86).
[98] Paul Petit, *Les étudiants de Libanius* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1957), Appendix III.
[99] Julian *Against the Galilaeans* 229e-230a (ed. and trans. Wright).

active service. The corps of *protectores domestici* was a new development from the *scholae palatinae*, or personal guard, of the emperor.[100] Originally, the members of this unit were identified as *protectores*, but sometime before 354— the year when Ammianus appears for the first time as *protector domesticus* under the command of Ursicinus— some members received the title of *domestici*. According to legislation, *domestici* and *protectores* were officially differentiated at the end of the 300s.[101] The *protectores* served their commanders individually, presumably *magistri militum*, whereas the *domestici* were organized into military units under the command of high officers near the emperor, like the *magister equitum* Ursicinus. Each Augustus had four *scholae* of *domestici* under the command of a single *comes domesticorum* in Ammianus' time.[102] Although the *domestici* had more privileges than the simple *protectores*, their functions were actually the same.[103] *Protectores* and *domestici* were in charge of the recruitment of the sons of veterans and vagrants, supervised the transportation of provisions in roads and ports, were ordered to arrest and escort important persons, and undertook specific military missions such as espionage or the building of fortifications.[104]

Before the end of the fourth century, only veterans could obtain the privilege of becoming *protectores*. Flavius Abinnaeus achieved the rank of *protector* from the

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[100] For information on the *protectores* see Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, vol. 2, 636-40; Frank, *Scholae Palatinae*, 81-97.

[101] *Codex Theodosianus* 6.24.5-6; 8-9 (ed. and trans. Pharr).

[102] *Notitia Dignitatum*. *Or.* 1.14-16; *Or.* 15.1-10; *Or.*113.1-7 (ed. Seeck).

[103] Ammianus applies the titles *protector*, *domesticus*, and *protector domesticus* to Jovian without being aware of the administrative differences: 22.16.20; 25.5.4.8.

[104] Recruitment: *Codex Theodosianus*. 7.22.2 (326); 18.10 (400) (ed. and trans. Pharr); transportation control: *Codex Theodosianus* 8.5.30 (368); 7.16.3 (420) (ed. and trans. Pharr); arrest and custody of prisoners: *Codex Theodosianus* 9.27.3 (382) (ed. and trans. Pharr); *RG* 14.7.12; 15.13.10; 29.3.8; 5.7; fortification of Euphrates: *RG* 18.7.6; espionage: *RG* 18.6.21.

emperors Constans and Valens in 341, after 33 years of service.[105] But the corps ended up accepting young noble individuals with good connections. The advantages the rank offered were undoubtedly attractive to members of the curial class. In addition to the exemption from curial duties, the *domestici* received other benefits like allowances, retirement pay and privileges in the court.[106] Moreover, an early entry into this unit, which was confirmed by an act of loyalty called *adoratio* (the honour of kissing the hem of the emperor's robe),[107] offered a career of honours and promotions for any ambitious officer.[108]

As I showed above, Ammianus joined this elite corps when he was 19 or in his early 20s. He achieved this status without having served in the ranks, a privilege that only someone from his class could have obtained.

Contrary to the suggestion that the educational environment provided Ammianus with a good command of Latin before joining the army, it could be argued that, since Latin was the official language in the army, the historian would have eventually become fluent during his years of service. Recently, Adams has provided extensive evidence that seriously questions what he calls the "persistent misconception" defining Latin as the official language of the army. Military documents from Egypt reveal that Greek was also acceptable for official purposes. One clear example, Adams argues, is the Abinnaeus Archive. In this archive, there are numerous official communications in Greek, whereas Latin is employed in only two letters. These two letters deal with appointment to or

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[105] H. Idris Bell, introduction to *The Abinnaeus Archive: Papers of a Roman Officer in the Reign of Constantius II* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), 6-12, 34-37.
[106] *Codex Theodosianus* 6.24.1; 7.20.5, 8; 13.1.14; 6.24.4; 7.4.10 (ed. and trans. Pharr). Many individuals tried to take advantage of the situation and joined the corps only by name; the central government reacted eliminating their privileges with several laws. *Codex Theodosianus* 6.24.5-6; 7.21.2-3; 8.7.2-3; 12.1.38, 88 (ed. and trans. Pharr).
[107] Ibid., 8.7.9; 10.22.3.
[108] Ibid., 6.24.7-11; 6.25.1.

dismissal from the command of the unit.[109] In fact, as Adams shows, Latin is only used for certain official purposes: transmission of orders, receipts for money received by individuals, *diplomata* or certificates of discharge of auxiliaries, dedications to emperors, and some epitaphs. Therefore, Adams argues, Latin was rarely obligatory in the army. Moreover, a linguistic analysis of numerous documents shows that low-rank officers struggled to write correct Latin. Most soldiers merely had a basic command of spoken Latin that allowed them to perform their military duties.[110] Overall, the evidence examined by Adams suggests that fluency in both spoken and written Latin must have been limited to a handful of high-rank officers. In other words, fluency in Latin was not so widely spread in the eastern army as some scholars had previously claimed. Consequently, this finding places the military position of Ammianus under a new light. Indeed, we are in a better position to appreciate how valuable Ammianus' bilingual skills were in order to perform his duties as a *protector domesticus*. The rank of *protectores domestici* required a good knowledge of both languages to undertake tasks like diplomacy or intelligence work. As an illustration of the sort of tasks a *protector domesticus* was involved, we can refer to Ammianus' participation in Ursicinus' mission to suppress the revolt of Silvanus, a Frank who had declared himself emperor in Cologne in 355(15.5.1-38). Ammianus was directly involved in the conspiracy to assassinate Silvanus, although he did not take part in the murder itself (15.5.30). Ammianus himself

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[109] Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 599-608. Conversely, some studies on bilingualism and the Roman army in Egypt refer to Latin as the official language of the army. See G. R. Watson, "Documentation in the Roman Army," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, part 2, vol. 1, ed. H. Temporini and W. Hasse (Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1974), 496; Jorma Kaimio, *The Romans and the Greek Language* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1979), 27; J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens* (London: Duckworth, 1979), 131; Richard Alston, *Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt* (London: Routledge, 1995), 138; Rochette, *Le latin dans le monde grec*, 147.

[110] Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 617-23.

supplies some hints about the cultural background of the *protectores*. For instance, Ammianus mentions that the *protector* Antoninus' knowledge of both languages was necessary for the intelligence work he performed for the Romans (18.5.1-2). As mentioned above, the context clearly indicates that the historian was referring to Antoninus' knowledge of Latin and Greek.

CONCLUSION

The fact that Ammianus joined the army as a *protector domesticus* when he was only between 19 and 22 years old indicates that he came from a family with strong connections with the military elite. Ammianus probably entered the army under the recommendation of the *magister equitum per Orientem*, Ursicinus. As regards Ammianus' place of birth, there is no strong evidence to substantiate the thesis that he came from Antioch. In view of this, we need to consider Ammianus' biography and education within the broader context of the linguistic and cultural landscape we described in the introductory chapter.

The fact that the text of the *RG* reveals that Greek was Ammianus' dominant language does not necessarily imply that the Latin of the historian lacked high literary standards. Scholars have already identified the historian's efforts to imitate Latin authors as well as to accommodate the language of the *RG* to the aesthetic trends of the period. As a result, I have proposed to understand the artificiality of Ammianus' Latin style in connection with an educational environment characterized by the increasing popularity of Latin instruction in the East. Since Latin played a crucial role in the careers of numerous

individuals—as the prosopographical analysis included in the previous chapter reveals—it is not difficult to establish a parallelism with Ammianus' own experience. Knowledge of Latin and Greek was essential to undertake the duties of a *protector domesticus*. The command of Latin Ammianus needed in order to perform tasks as a diplomat and a spy dramatically differed from the basic working knowledge that was common in the Roman army. Therefore, Ammianus' knowledge of Latin would have placed him within a privileged elite of officers. As with the example of Musonianus, which Ammianus mentions, Latin became a sign of career success and social distinction. Like other easterners who learnt Latin as an essential step to begin a career in the imperial administration, Ammianus must have also received some sort of Latin instruction even before he entered the army.

Concerning the impact of the curriculum on the *RG*, an examination of Ammianus' borrowings from Greek and Latin writers show that the historian had a better knowledge of Latin literature, especially of authors like Cicero and Vergil, which were normally included in bilingual manuals in the East. This fact is perfectly compatible with the thesis that Ammianus undertook Latin studies before entering the army as a young officer. As regards philosophical studies, they were undertaken only by a few who had already finished their training in rhetoric. Ammianus joined the army too young for having undertaken these studies. Furthermore, the text of the *RG* does not reveal that Ammianus belonged to a particular philosophical school or that he even had a systematic knowledge of philosophy. Regarding the thesis that he may have been raised as a Christian, I have argued that this issue is indeed irrelevant in the context of the educational background since there is no evidence for the existence of a Christian

curriculum. In addition, the text of the *RG* does not indicate the impact of an education in the scriptures.

The main objective of this chapter has been to describe the educational and linguistic background of Ammianus, as well as to establish an adequate framework to initiate a discussion about whether the text of the *RG* reveals a comprehensive rhetorical training and the content of the traditional curriculum. In this examination, I will try to identify whether there are signs of the impact of Latin rhetoric. The linguistic landscape I have previously described in the introduction suggests that some kind of cultural assimilation took place among easterners. In this sense, we should re-assess the scholarly discussion about how much of a Greek we can detect in the *RG*. Traditionally, scholars have focussed on both the language of the *RG* and on Ammianus' position as an intellectual in the Greek world. These studies have attempted to evaluate the actual significance of the historian's eastern origin, examining whether the Latin of the *RG* was greatly influenced by Greek, and whether the use of numerous digressions define Ammianus as part of the Greek intellectual tradition.[111] Moreover, Ammianus' cultural ambiguity has greatly contributed to constructing the image of a historian who was intellectually and socially isolated at Rome.[112] On the contrary, I suggest that we should abandon the traditional framework that seems to assume the existence of a cultural dichotomy or tension between East and West. This view seems to assume that Libanius' strong criticism against Roman studies was popular in the East. In fact, knowledge of Latin played a relevant role in Ammianus' education. The historian made Latin a vehicle

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[111] See recent discussion along these lines in Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 452-72, and in Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 65-78.

[112] Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Lonely Historian Ammianus Marcellinus," in *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, 127-40 (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1977); Cameron, "The Roman Friends of Ammianus," 15-28.

for his view of the Roman Empire, and, it is very plausible that he, like other easterners writing in Latin, conceived his own intellectual experience in terms of a synthesis rather than a tension. In this context, how can we talk about an individual culturally isolated?[113]

[113] The fact that Ammianus' own experience can be explained by the cultural context of the age would challenge Cameron's conclusions regarding Ammianus' social and cultural isolation. See Cameron, "The Roman Friends of Ammianus," 15-28.

2

THE ROLE OF FIRST-HAND SOURCES AND RHETORIC IN THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I discussed, among other things, how the *RG* is an essential source for the reconstruction of Ammianus' early life. In this chapter, I will concentrate on those passages in the *RG* which are the result either of the historian's personal experience or of the testimony of eyewitnesses. Even though Ammianus was frequently present at the historical events he described or heard about from eyewitnesses, his account of the past is often far from accurate. As I will explain in this chapter, his distortion of reality has much to do with the submission of the author to rhetorical convention. Based on what Ammianus himself states, it is clear that the historian does not hesitate to sacrifice realistic representation for stylistic purposes. I will show how the tradition of ancient literary theory supports this approach. To illustrate my argument I will concentrate on the role played by ἐνάργεια in three particular passages of the *RG*. According to ancient theory, ἐνάργεια consists of bringing a scene before the eyes of the reader. However, the purpose of this rhetorical device is not necessarily to represent a scene in an objective manner, but to raise the pathos of the audience. In my analysis, I will also pay attention to how ἐνάργεια receives a particular kind of treatment in Ammianus and among authors of the fourth century.

1. THE ROLE OF AUTOPSY AND EYEWITNESSES

1.1.Autopsy.

In book 15 Ammianus announces his historical method, underlining the use of first-hand sources as the main guarantor of veracity: "So far as I could investigate the truth, I have, after putting the various events in clear order, related what I myself was allowed to witness in the course of my life, or to learn by meticulous questioning of those directly concerned." And the same approach is anticipated for the following books: "The rest, which the text to follow will disclose, we shall set forth to the best of our ability with still better style,[1] feeling no fear of critics of the prolixity of our work, as they consider it" (15.1.1). When Ammianus wrote this particular preface, he was referring to his original plan that extended his work until the death of Jovian early in 364, an event that represented the epilogue to Julian's Persian expedition. The preface to book 26 clearly reveals that books 26 through 31 were written as a late addition: "Having narrated the course of events with the strictest care up to the bounds of the present epoch, I had already determined to withdraw my foot from the more familiar tracks, partly to withdraw the dangers which are always connected with the truth..." (26.1.1) Whatever reasons Ammianus had to postpone the writing, or the recitation, of the section dealing with the reigns of the Pannonian Valens and Valentinian I, they were eventually overcome, probably after the death of Valentinian II in 392.[2]

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[1] Here I translate *limatius* by the more common meaning of "in a more polished style", instead of 'with greater accuracy" as J. C. Rolfe translates. Probably Ammianus is somehow announcing a literary style worth the deeds of his hero Julian. Cf. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 29-30.

[2] Matthews, who merely disregards the relevance of the introduction to book 26, rejects the widely accepted thesis that Ammianus wrote a second instalment. See *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 481, n. 34. Barnes, who agrees with Matthews, proposes a complete new numeration of the work. See *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 20-21.

Ammianus's preface to book 15 contains a legitimate claim if we consider that the core of Ammianus' narrative coincides with his own military experience under the command of Ursicinus and, afterwards, under Julian. Since it has been generally assumed that the lost 13 books were a summary covering two and half centuries from Nerva's accession in 96 (31.6.9),[3] it is reasonable to state that at the beginning of book 15 the historian is announcing the method that traditionally has been considered the most appropriate for contemporary history. Other Greek historians had already thought of contemporary history in terms of autopsy and eyewitnesses: Ephorus in the fourth century B.C., Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Diodorus in the late first century B.C, Josephus in the first century A.D., and Herodian and Dio Cassius in the third century A.D.[4] Within the broad context of Graeco-Roman historiography, Herodotus first established the method of interrogating eyewitnesses and other informed parties.[5] Thucydides also insisted on the relevance of accurate observation and cross-questioning.[6] And Polybius emphasized the idea that the historian should travel in order to make personal

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[3] This assumption is mainly based on the belief that the extant books were preserved because they covered a detailed narrative, as Rolfe's translation of *limatius* would suggest, whereas the lost 13 books were written in the epitomizing style so popular in the fourth century. But H. T. Rowel, who elaborated a thesis first proposed by Hugo Michael's dissertation "De Ammiani Marcellini studiis Ciceronianis" (Ph.D. diss., Breslau, 1874), 50, argues that book 14 does not announce any change in the style of the narrative. Rowel then suggests that the words of the epilogue explaining the span of the work, from Nerva's principate to the death of Valens in 378, could point to two different works, both written in detail, of which one is a continuation of the other. Since the introduction to book 15 indicates that the historian draws the information from meticulous questioning and personal experience, we should ask, continues Rowel, how far back these sources of information would allow us to go. By establishing the average span of time covered in each book, 14 through 25, Rowel concludes that the starting point of this second work would be 337, the date of Constantine's death and the accession of his sons. See *Ammianus Marcellinus, Soldier-Historian of the Late Roman Empire* (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, 1964), 15-21. However, neither theory would fundamentally contradict what the preface of book 15 implies: Ammianus' participation in his own history.

[4] See Gert Avenarius, *Lukians Schrift zur Geschichtsschreibung*, (Meisenheim-am-Glan: Hain, 1956), 78-79.

[5] Herodotus 1.1 (ed. and trans. Godley).

[6] Thucydides 1.22; 5.26 (ed. Jones and Powell).

observations and question witnesses.[7] In other words, the profession of the Greek historian required autopsy, personal inquiry, and travel. He was often a member of the elite, since a privileged social status was vital to investigate the policies of the leaders of the city-states. However, he was not a statesman but a " travelling intellectual." The fact that these writers would travel even to regions outside the areas of Hellenic influence strongly determined the ecumenical nature of Greek historical writing. In contrast, as Fornara argues, the history of the Roman Empire composed in Latin was traditionally restricted to the city of Rome, dealing with other regions of the Empire, and beyond, whenever events in these areas had an impact on Rome as well as the Empire in general. In addition, many Latin historians, explains Fornara, were not intellectuals by profession but statesmen who, after being directly involved in imperial politics, chose to write history as a way to vindicate their political careers. Being former senators or close to the circles of the imperial government, they had easy access to sources located in the capital itself, such as senatorial proceedings, imperial speeches, memoirs, letters, and even those who had participated in the events.[8] Curiously, Ammianus represents a synthesis of both traditions. While he did not make a great use of Greek historians like Herodotus and Thucydides, as I argued in chapter 1, it seems that he wished to be identified as part of the Greek intellectual tradition. The explicit claims that he employed both personal observation and information from eyewitnesses are theoretically materialized by the insertion of numerous ethnographical digressions, a clear tribute to the intellectual tradition initiated by Herodotus. At the same time, it is clear that the city of Rome played a significant role in the *RG*. Indeed, in his narrative Ammianus constantly returns to the

[7] Polybius 3.4.12-3; 4.2.1-4; 12.27.1-8 (ed. and trans. Paton).
[8] Fornara, *The Nature of History*, 47-61.

city to inform us about important political events such as the emperor Constantius' visit in 357, or simply to describe aspects of the life in the capital, including food riots and satirical descriptions of the vices of the Roman aristocracy and people. As pointed out by scholars, these passages are designed to emphasize the historical role of Rome as a symbol of the continuity of the Empire.[9]

To summarize: the text of the *RG* reflects the presence of two distinctive historiographical traditions. On one hand, as a soldier and traveller, Ammianus presents himself as a direct source of the events and regions he describes. On the other hand, we also need to acknowledge the historian's strong desire to identify himself with the historical significance of Rome. His decision to write the *RG* in Latin must have been intimately connected to his choice to stay in the capital, a unique opportunity to obtain information from those who were involved in the affairs of imperial government. Consequently, in the following sections of this chapter, I will enumerate those passages in the *RG* that are directly derived from personal experience and information from witnesses. This analysis will provide us with an appropriate context to evaluate the actual role of rhetoric in shaping the historical narrative.

The biographical passages in the *RG* are as follows: in 355 Ursicinus was sent to Cologne to suppress the usurper Silvanus (15.5.1ff). Ammianus, who was one of the ten *protectores domestici* accompanying Ursicinus (15.5.22), gives an intense and detailed account of the episode, sharing with the readers his constant fear of being executed at the hands of Silvanus' supporters. The operation was finally successful as Ursicinus bribed some soldiers from the Bracchiati and Cornuti who entered the palace, dragged Silvanus

[9] John Matthews, "Ammianus and the Eternity of Rome," in *The Inheritance of Historiography, 350-900*, ed. C. Holdsworth and T. P. Wiseman (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1986), 17-29; *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 279 ff; Harrison, "*Templum Mundi Totius*," 178-90.

from a chapel where he had taken refuge, and butchered him (15.5.30-1). In 359, we find Ammianus in a small group led by Ursicinus running through the desert between Nisibis and the fortress of Amudis. The chaotic situation provoked by the Persian invasion is further worsened, explains Ammianus, by the constant conspiracies undermining the capacity of his master Ursicinus (18.6.1ff). In the same year, Ammianus is again involved in an intelligence mission as he is sent to Corduene in order to get information about the size and location of the Persian troops. Ammianus then holds some private meetings with the satrap Jovinianus (18.6.20-3; 7.1-2) who, having been a hostage in Syria some years previously, knew Ammianus and was willing to share strategic information with the Romans.

Ammianus vividly describes numerous adventures and military episodes taking place during the desperate withdrawal of the Roman troops towards Amida. In these episodes, the reader closely views the historian in his role as a man of action. For instance, Ammianus and a group of soldiers found a soldier hidden in the woods of Meiacarire and brought him to the general Ursicinus:

> On being brought before the general, because of fear he gave contradictory answers and so fell under suspicion. But influenced by threats made against him, he told the whole truth, saying that he was born at Paris in Gaul and served in a cavalry troop; but in fear of punishment for a fault he had once committed he had deserted to the Persians. Then, being found to be of upright character, and having married and reared children, he was sent as a spy to our territories and often brought back trustworthy news. But now he had been sent out by the grandees Tamsapor and Nohodares, who had led the bands of pillagers, and was returning to them, to report what he had learned. After this, having added what he knew about what the enemy was doing, he was put to death (18. 6.16).

In the course of the Roman withdrawal, one of the most critical moments occurred when the Illyrian cavalry, composed of seven hundred horsemen, withdrew in cowardly fashion from the public roads, allowing the Persian soldiers to penetrate the unguarded paths and hide behind some high mounds near Amida (18.8.2-3). The Roman troops were finally driven to the banks of the Tigris. Amid the chaos of the battle, Ursicinus and Ammianus managed to escape in different directions (18.8.10-11). The latter, who saw himself surrounded on all sides by the Persians, hastened to the city, finding only a narrow path to ascend the hill:

> Here, mingled with the Persians, who were rushing to the higher ground with the same effort as ourselves, we remained motionless until sunrise of the next day, so crowded together that the bodies of the slain, held upright by the throng, could nowhere find room to fall, and that in front of me a soldier with his head cut in two, and split into equal halves by a powerful sword stroke, was so pressed on all sides that he stood erect like a stump (18.8.12).

Finally, during the Persian siege of Amida in 359 (19.1.1 ff), the historian's narrative again goes beyond the view of the mere observer. The vividness of the whole episode reveals the testimony of the eyewitness as well as the officer who was directly involved in the defense of the city. He participated in the decision to place the ballistae that killed 70 Persian bowmen from the king's bodyguard who had captured a tower on the walls: "so the work was divided among us and five of the lighter ballistae were moved and placed over against the tower, rapidly pouring forth wooden shafts, which sometimes pierced even two men at a time" (19.5.6). Ammianus was also among those who decided to send a group of Gallic troops to attack nearby outposts: "We, at our wit's end and in doubt what position ought to be made to the raging Gauls, at last chose this

course as the best, to which they reluctantly consented" (19.6.5). And, when the fall of the city was approaching, Ammianus was again involved in decision making: "And at last, after turning over my plans, we resolved upon a plan which speedily action made the safer, namely, to oppose four scorpions to those same ballistae" (19.7.6). The historian finally narrates with detail how, following the capture of Amida, he miraculously escaped with two others and fled to Antioch (19.8.1ff). Ammianus narrates their dangerous journey through the desert with great vividness, transmitting to the reader a powerful image of danger and desolation. His detailed description of the dead groom that had been dragged by his horse is perhaps one of the passages that best illustrates the biographical character of the Amida episode:

> A groom, mounted on a runaway horse without saddle or bit, in order not to fall off had tied the rein by which, in the usual manner, the horse was guided, tightly to his left hand; and afterwards, being thrown off and unable to loose the knot, he was torn limb from limb as he was dragged through desert places and woods, while the animal exhausted by running, was held back by the weight of the dead body" (19.8.7).

1.2. Eyewitnesses.

The major eyewitnesses and informants named by Ammianus are as follows. Discenes, a tribune and *notarius*, provides the figure for the Persian losses in Amida (19.9.9). The *notarius* Philagrius was certainly the historian's direct source for an episode in 363.[10] He had received sealed orders from the emperor Julian to arrest Vadomarius,

[10] See Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 376-77. Additionally, David Woods argues that Vadomarius himself was a source for Ammianus. See "Ammianus Marcellinus and the *Rex Alamannorum* Vadomarius," *Mnemosyne* 53, no. 6 (2000): 690-710.

king of the Alamanni, if he crossed the Rhine (21.4.1-6).[11] Though the confidential letter was publicly read after the arrest, the detailed description of the whole episode, which records Julian's precise instructions about the secrecy of the orders as well as depicts the *notarius* withdrawing to a private room to read the letter, makes it likely that Philagrius confided the story to Ammianus. In the same passage, Philagrius is portrayed as "later count of the Orient," an office normally held at Antioch. Although Philagrius is attested in that post in 382,[12] when Ammianus may have already been on his way to the West, Philagrius' earlier connection with Antioch is proven by Libanius. The orator states that he drew information on the details of Julian's Persian campaign of 363 from Philagrius' journal.[13] Ammianus was part of this campaign.

Syagrius, *notarius* of Valentinian and afterwards "prefect and consul" (28.2.5), was the only survivor of an Alamannic attack against a Roman fortification expedition working over the Rhine. The fact that the historian gives an accurate and sympathetic account of the episode (28.2.5-9)—Syagrius was blamed and dismissed for the defeat—and that he also mentions Syagrius' later career, seems to indicate that the former *notarius* was the direct source.[14]

For part of the account of Julian's stay in Constantinople, Ammianus seems to have relied on the testimony of the Roman senator Vettius Agorius Praetextatus. Whereas the description of Julian's arrival in the eastern capital is an echo of the panegyrical literature of the time (22.2.1-5)—the historian was perhaps inspired by Mamertinus'

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[11] According to some rumours, argues Ammianus, Constantius had made a secret alliance with Vadomarius so that the Alamanni king would sometimes attack the provinces bordering his own territory in order to keep Julian in the defence of Gaul. See 21.3.4-5.
[12] *Codex Theodosianus* 8.5.41 (20 September)(ed. and trans. Pharr).
[13] Libanius *Epistulae* 115 (ed. and trans. Norman). See Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 162.
[14] Ibid., 376-77.

panegyric on January 1st, 362—Ammianus also relates a number of anecdotes about Julian's behavior in Constantinople (22.7.1ff.) that were witnessed by the Roman senator: "Present at all these events was Praetextatus, a senator of noble character and old-time dignity, whom Julian had chanced to find engaged in private business at Constantinople and on his own initiative had appointed governor of Achaia with proconsular authority." (22.7.6). Two of these anecdotes refer to Julian's violation of protocol, a fault the historian strongly censures. In the first, the emperor processed on foot at the inauguration of the consuls of the year. As a meeting of the senate was interrupted by the news of the arrival of the philosopher Maximus, the emperor suddenly leapt from his seat, greeted his friend outside the senate-house and led him inside. In the second, Julian dismissed two former members of the secret service who, in order to have their military rank restored, came to inform him about the whereabouts of Florentius, a former praetorian perfect who had been condemned to death *in absentia*. The fact that only one of these anecdotes, the arrival of the philosopher Maximus, is reported elsewhere makes Praetextatus the best candidate to be their source.[15] Cameron rejects this possibility, wrongly assuming that a personal contact or friendship between the historian and senator would be a necessary step for Praetextatus to become Ammianus' source.[16] Indeed, the statement *aderat his omnibus Praetextatus* does not necessarily imply that the senator was Ammianus' direct source. True, Ammianus' *encomium* of Praetextatus (27.9.8) is also found in other authors, and the general admiration for the Roman senator is recognized even by Jerome, who always considered Praetextatus a threat to Christianity.[17] However, we would still

[15] See Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, 230-31.
[16] Cameron, "The Roman Friends of Ammianus," 22-23.
[17] For a detailed discussion of Praetextatus' religious ideas as well as his role in the so-called "pagan revival" in the West see H. Bloch, "A New Document in the Last Pagan Revival in the West," *Harvard*

need to answer the following questions: Why would the historian have included the mention of Praetextatus immediately after the account of these particular anecdotes? Why do we not assume that Praetextatus was an indirect source, accepting, therefore, Cameron's reservations about the historian being in touch with the Roman aristocratic circles?

Another informant was probably the historian Aurelius Victor, who was at Sirmium when Julian entered the city in 363. From there, Julian brought him to Naessus, where, according to the historian, Julian made him consular governor of Pannonia Secunda and honored him with a bronze statue (21.10.6). Ammianus knew him or, at least, knew about Aurelius Victor's political and literary career when he became prefect of Rome in 388-9. By that time, Ammianus was already at Rome engaged in the composition of his work, and Victor's testimony would have been useful for details of Julian's military campaign in Pannonia.

Gimazane has suggested the names of three other informants. His suggestions, however, are insufficient to establish a conclusive connection between the eyewitness and a particular passage. The eunuch Eutherius was one of Ammianus' sources. He is portrayed as having extraordinary powers of memory and, during his years of retirement at Rome, where the historian may have met him, as a man honored and loved by all

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Theological Review 38 (1945): 203 ff. Ammianus' eulogy is not an empty general account of virtues as prescribed in Menander's treatise. The historian gives numerous details of Praetextatus' achievements. He tactfully dealt with the riots that followed the election of Pope Damasus, decreed important building reforms in the city, standardized weights and measures. Finally, he always showed integrity in his judicial duties (27.9.8). After Praetextatus' death, the senate erected a statue to his memory (Symmachus *Relationes* 10 (ed. and trans. Barrow)), and another was erected by the Vestal Virgins (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* 6.2145). Symmachus emotionally summarizes the reaction of the Roman people: *recusavit populos sollemnes theatri voluptates* (Symmachus *Relationes* 10 (ed. and trans. Barrow)). Jerome, who had many motives to criticize Praetextatus' religious ideas, reports the commotion of the city at the senator's death: *urbs universa commota.* Jerome *Contra Iohannem Hierosolymitatum.* 8 (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Latina* 23.337).

classes (16.7.5-8).[18] Eupraxius, Valentinian's *magister memoriae*, is proposed as a source for the events at Valentinian's court, and the Antiochene Hypatius, consul and prefect of the city, would be the informant for both the secret deliberations of Constantius, his brother-in-law, and the high praise of Eusebia, his sister.[19]

Ammianus vaguely mentions other eyewitnesses who, apparently, became his informants: the *iunctiores proximi* of Constantius (15.8.8; 21.14.2) and Julian (20.5.10; 25.2.3), the *duo fidissimi* of Varronianus, who was the father of Jovian (25.10.16) or the young man, a personal guard of Valens, who escaped the fate of the emperor (31.13.16). What most of these personal attendants, advisers and close friends reported are dreams of emperors. Constantius confesses to his intimate friends his political weakness and the fear that his guardian spirit has finally deserted him. Julian, on two different occasions, the first night before he was proclaimed Augustus and the second before his own death, describes to his close friends a vision of the *genius publicus*. Varronianus, father of Jovian, entrusts to two of his confidential friends a dream announcing the elevation of his son.

To summarize: there are numerous occasions in the *RG*, on which we can establish a link between a first-hand source and the historical representation. These examples confirm what the historian himself says in his two methodological prefaces. Although autopsy and eyewitnesses are not the only sources of the *RG*, they certainly played a central role in its composition.

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[18] The role of Eutherius and other eunuchs in the *RG* is not restricted to being sources for imperial politics. In his analysis of Ammianus' treatment of eunuchs, S. Tougher argues that the historian goes further than depicting the powerful influence of eunuchs in general. Their vices and physical deformities become a useful paradigm for the historian's criticism of the conditions, and decline, of the empire. See Shaun Tougher, "Ammianus and the Eunuchs," in *The Late Roman Empire and Its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, ed. Jan Willem Drijevers and David Hunt (London: Routledge, 1999), 64-73.

[19] Gimazane, *Ammien Marcelline*, 164-175. See Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, 228-30.

2. THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND RHETORICAL CONVENTION

In his brief preface to book 26, the historian inserts a response to some critics of his work. He states that the chief objective of history is "to detail the highlights of events" (*discurrere per negotiorum celsitudines assuetas*), detaching himself from any concern for historical anecdotes, like reporting what a king said at the dinner table, as well as the trivial details of unimportant causes (*non humilium minutias indagare causarum*). Ammianus also reflects this principle in a passage of his digression on the vices of the Roman aristocracy, who are criticized for reading only Juvenal and the biographer Marius Maximus (28.4.14). While the criticism of Maximus is perfectly consistent with the historian's rejection of the biographical genre, scholars have struggled to justify the historian's inclusion of Juvenal, since Ammianus himself is employing the literary conventions of satire in this passage.[20] Nevertheless, Ammianus essentially criticizes what he judged as a wrong taste for a low style implicit in any depiction of everyday reality, which is the main focus of satire, and, to a great extent, of biography. Since satire was a Roman creation, it is very plausible that Ammianus was unable to

[20] Juvenal's anti-Greek sentiment was probably one of the reasons for Ammianus' criticism. In the third satire, Juvenal launches a long lampoon against the Greeks, including those from Syria. Juvenal 3.60-125; 62 (ed. and trans. Braund). Other examples of anti-Greek sentiment can be found in Juvenal 6.184-91; 11.147-8 (ed. and trans. Braund). That Ammianus may have reacted against Juvenal's reference to his city was first suggested by Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, 15. For an extensive bibliography about Ammianus' attitude towards Juvenal see P. J. Smith. "A Note on Ammianus Marcellinus and Juvenal," *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 19 (1994), 23-24.

reconcile the solemnity traditionally attributed to the hexameter—a metric form normally employed in epic poetry—with topics largely based on real life.[21]

It is certainly clear that through a criticism of the genres of biography and satire, Ammianus mainly wishes to categorize the *RG* as a historical work written in the high style. This means that Ammianus focuses on events that are relevant not only for their historical significance but also for their rhetorical potential.[22] Moreover, there is an important detail in his methodological statements that scholars have overlooked. Ammianus openly refuses to include the type of anecdotal and detailed narrative that was common in the biographical genre. Why is this so? Is Ammianus' stylistic attitude unique within the Graeco-Roman literary tradition? Is this particular literary prejudice the result of rhetorical convention? Furthermore, one must also ask how the historian manages to reconcile the relevance given to both informants and autopsy with the fact that a detailed realistic description must be rejected for stylistic reasons.

An examination of some conventions established in the tradition of ancient literary criticism explains why ancient authors often refused to apply a direct observation of the world. When talking about the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* Longinus states:

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[21] A definition of satire by the fourth-century grammarian Diomedes offers some hints. He says that Satire is then defined as a scurrilous poem, and that it is composed to censure men's vices, like the ones that Lucilius, Horace and Juvenal wrote. See H. Keil, and H. Hagen, ed., *Grammatici Latini ex recensione Henrici Keilii*, vol. 1 (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1961), 485. The definition stresses two aspects: its poetic form and its function. It is plausible that Ammianus was exclusively criticizing the formal aspect of satire.

[22] The research on the relations between history and eloquence was initiated by Theodore C. Burgess in a brief chapter of the important book *Epideictic Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1902), 195-214. Ancient definitions of the historical genre were systematically analyzed by F. Wehrli in "Die Geschichtsschreibung im Lichte der antiken Theorie," in *Eumusia: Festgabe für Ernst Howald* (n.p.: Erlenbach, E. Rentsch, 1947), 54-71. For a broad examination of the theoretical foundations of Graeco-Roman history see Fornara, *The Nature of History*. The controversy begins, however, when trying to determine if that influence actually turns ancient history into "literature" as opposed to "scientific history." See A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography: Four Studies* (London: Croom Helm; Portland, Or.: Areopagitica, 1988), 197-212.

There is another justification for our considering the *Odyssey* as well as the *Iliad*. I wanted you to realize how, in great writers and poets, declining emotional power passes into character portrayals. For instance, his character sketches of the daily life in Odysseus' household constitute a sort of comedy of character.[23]

Aristotle had already made a clear distinction between the two Homeric poems: "Of his poems, the *Iliad*'s structure is simple and rich in suffering (παθητικόν) while the *Odyssey* is complex (it is pervaded by recognition) and character-based (ἠθική)."[24] Aristotle and Longinus mean that the *Odyssey* is a more realistic work and, consequently, lighter in emotional tone. This antithesis between πάθος and ἦθος had a great influence upon ancient literary criticism. Cicero argues that the ideal orator should be aware of these two topics: "One, which the Greeks call ἠθικόν or "expressive character" is related to men's nature and character, their habits and all the intercourse of life; the other, which they call παθητικόν or "relating to emotions," arouses and excites the emotions: in this part alone oratory reigns supreme."[25] In a general sense, the overall idea contained in this distinction is that realistic representations lacked seriousness and emotion. This notion is further systematized within the ancient theory of styles, whose fundamental criterion is propriety: certain subjects require certain styles and a violation of this principle is always a mistake.[26] Consequently, a historical work written in the high style would automatically exclude realistic subjects such as the representation of everyday life.[27]

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[23] Longinus *On the Sublime* 9.15 (ed. and trans. Fyfe, rev. Russell).
[24] Aristotle *Poetica* 1459b 14 (ed. and trans. Halliwell)
[25] Cicero *Orator ad M. Brutum* 128 (ed. and trans. Hubbell). See Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 6.2.8-24 (ed. and trans. Russell); Gordon Willis Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 670-71.
[26] Thus when Demetrius criticizes the rhetorician Polycrates, who specialized in ironical encomia of villains and unusual subjects like pots and mice, he says: "So play, as I say, is legitimate, but otherwise preserve propriety, whatever the subject; or in other words, use the relevant style, slight for slight themes, grand for grand themes." Demetrius *De elocutione* 120 (ed. and trans. Innes). This work is our best guide

Direct observation of the world was not the main inspirational source among ancient writers. Instead, they gave priority to the use of strict rhetorical norms concerning literary form and content. In other words, an education in rhetoric provided the author with the topics and stylistic conventions appropriate for each literary genre. We can define this literary approach as "bookish", and we can observe the culmination of this attitude in Hellenistic authors, who would have a decisive influence on the development of Latin literature from the times of the Late Republic. Vergil's description of the African harbour where the Trojans landed is not a representation to be identified with a concrete place. It is, however, a stereotyped account containing Homeric features that the poet frequently employs elsewhere.[28] This approach remained intact in the fourth century. For instance, Ausonius' *Mosella* is largely an idyllic picture that certainly does not describe the contemporary countryside; indeed, archaeological research clearly shows that the

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for the theory of styles in classical literary criticism as well as a decisive source in subsequent works on the subject.

[27] E. Auerbach argues that the only ancient literary representation that can be considered "realistic" is Petronius' *Satyricon*. In many passages of this novel, the author renounces to employ any kind of rhetorical stylization, letting the characters talk by themselves, so that a particular social milieu with its sociological background is depicted. The ancient convention about the strict division of styles, continues Auerbach, would prevent Petronius' characterization from becoming the subject of a tragic plot. In other words, vulgar characters talking in the lowest style should always stay in the realm of comedy. Further, Auerbach explains how this literary convention seriously limits the scope of ancient history, in which, therefore, the intellectual and economic conditions of everyday life are absent. See *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1953. Reprint, Princeton, N.Y.:Princeton University Press, 1991), 31 ff.

[28] In the commentary to this passage Servius discloses Vergil's literary approach: *topothesia est, id est fictus secundum poeticam locus*. However, it is somehow paradoxical that Servius subsequently tries to identify this location with New Carthage in Spain. Servius *Servii Grammatici qvi fervntvr in Vergilii carmina commentarii* (ed. Thilo and Hagen). B. Rhem was the first scholar to prove how Vergil's topographical descriptions can be classified into a number of literary types. See *Das geographische Bild des alten Italien in Vergils Aeneis* (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1932). Vergil's attitude towards what we may call the observable real world illustrates one of the defining features of Graeco-Roman literature. Williams thoroughly argues how actual observation of the world played a minor role in Latin poetry. See *Tradition and Originality*, 634-81.

physical surroundings never recovered from the Frankish invasion of 276.[29] The same literary attitude could be detected in the manner ancient historians dealt with topography: Their accounts are often vague and inaccurate. For example, the inaccuracy of Livy's topographical descriptions is not only justified by the imperfect geographical knowledge of the age. The audience always appreciated the insertion of literary elements. While Livy's readers possibly shared the historian's ignorance of geography, they may have fully appreciated, for instance, Livy's literary evocation of Vergil in the description of the Caudine Forks.[30] Nevertheless, it is also true that some ancient historians, such as Thucydides and Polybius, exercised more caution. In a relatively recent work on Greek historiography, particularly on the works of Herodotus and Thucydides, S. Hornblower expresses the need to distinguish between the overall reality of a historical event and the rhetorical embellishment required by the conventions of the historical genre: "we sell the past too cheaply if we allow that literary or rather rhetorical stylization of presentation are somehow incompatible with truthful reporting."[31] Furthermore, genre considerations must be taken into account when criticizing the fictitious character of some passages included in a work of history. For instance, as Fornara argues, the laws of ethnography are different from the rules of evidence and obedience of truth that were theoretically mandatory in the genre of history. The nature of ethnography is inquiry into whatever is worth telling or deserving to be heard. Whether something has been truly experienced by the author himself is secondary to the fact that it was a marvellous story told by one of

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[29] Ch.-M. Ternes, "Paysage réele et coulisse idyllique dans la *Mosella* d'Ausone," *Revue des Études Latines* 48 (1970): 394-95; Michael Roberts, "The *Mosella* of Ausonius: An Interpretation," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 114 (1984): 343-53.

[30] Nicholas Horsfall, "Illusion and Reality in Latin Topographical Writing," *Greece & Rome* 32, no. 2 (1985): 200.

[31] Simon Hornblower, introduction to *Greek Historiography*, ed. Simon Hornblower (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 18-19.

the inhabitants living on the limits of the known world.[32] As we will see in the next chapter, we must remember this important genre distinction in the analysis of Ammianus' digressions on geography and ethnography.

As I pointed out above, we also need to examine how Ammianus balanced the important role played by first-hand sources with the fact that a realistic representation was often considered unworthy of the high literary style required in the composition of history. More specifically, we need to assess whether Ammianus' use of a high style, whose main purpose is to arouse emotions in the reader, seriously distorts or replaces what he saw or heard from others. I intend to argue that Ammianus often employed rhetorical devices of composition learnt at school in order to increase the pathos of a particular scene. To explain this practice, we first need to understand the actual significance of a rhetorical tool that served to provide vivid descriptions in ancient historiography: ἐνάργεια or φαντασία. In their rhetorical treatises, orators emphasize the epideictic features of ἐνάργεια as well as its role in the historical genre. Theon stresses the suitability of ἐνάργεια for history.[33] The popularity of this rhetorical device among historians is ridiculed by Lucian.[34]

The author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* employes the term *demonstratio* to define ενάργεια: "It is Ocular Demonstration when an event is so described in words that the business seems to be enacted and the subject to pass vividly before our eyes."[35] Quintilian's definition adds the notion of pathos:

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[32] Fornara, *The Nature of History*, 14-15.
[33] Theon *Progymnasmata* 2.60.20 (Spengel *Rhetores Graeci*).
[34] Lucian *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* 20 (ed. and trans. Harmon, Kilburn and Macleod).
[35] *Auctor ad Herennium* 4.55.68 (ed. and trans. Caplan): *demostratio est cum ita verbis res exprimitur ut geri negotium et res ante oculos esse videatur*. For the Greek term there are actually several Latin translations: *demonstratio*, *evidentia*, *illustratio*, repraesentatio, *sub oculos subiectio*, and *visio*. See Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. David E. Orton

"The person who will show the greatest power in the expression of emotions will be the person who has properly formed what the Greeks call φαντασίας (let us call them "visions"), by which the images of absent things are presented to the mind in such a way that we seem actually to see them with our eyes and have them physically present to us. The man who really possesses this capacity will be the man who will exercise most power over man's emotions."[36]

In a strict sense, ἐνάργεια is the chief element in the exercise of ἔκφρασις or *descriptio*,[37] a common component of the preliminary rhetorical exercises or *progymnasmata*. The grammarian introduced his students to examples of *descriptio* from classical authors. For instance, Servius defines *Aen.* 10.653-55 as a *descriptio*, comparing it with 8.416 ff. Subsequently, the rhetor was in charge of teaching the compositional techniques and of setting the appropriate exercises.[38]

A vivid description, however, does not necessarily imply the use of sensory perception. The idea of ἐνάργεια is largely based on an important rhetorical concept called *narratio probabilis*. Cicero gives a perfect definition of this term: *probabilis erit narratio, si in ea videbuntur inesse ea quae solent apparere in veritate*: "the narrative will be plausible if it seems to embody characteristics which are accustomed to appear in

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and R. Dean Anderson, trans. Matthew T. Bliss, Annemiek Jansen, and David E. Orton (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 359-66.

[36] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 6.2.29 ff (ed. and trans. Russell). Among the scenes that would arouse high pathos are those describing the outrage of a city after falling to the enemy. See *Auctor ad Herennium* 4.51 (ed. and trans. Caplan); Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 8.3.67-70 (ed. and trans. Russell).

[37] G. Zanker points out that the term ἐνάργεια is sometimes used interchangeably with ἔκφρασις.. See G. Zanker, "Enargeia in Ancient Criticism of Poetry," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 124 (1981): 298. The rhetorician Nicolaus Sophista, writing in the fifth century, echoes the traditional definition of ἐνάργεια by employing the term ἔκφρασις: " ἔκφρασις tries to turn the hearers into spectators." *Progymnasmata* 68.11-12. See Nicolaus Sophista, *Nicolai Progymnasmata*, ed. J. Felten (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1913).

[38] However, it is likely that the *progymnasmata* were taught by the grammarian or rhetor in the first century A.D. Quintilian complains that grammarians perform tasks that were traditionally assigned to the rhetor. See Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 1.9.6; 2.1.1-13 (ed. and trans. Russell).

real life."[39] In his analysis of ἐνάργεια , Quintilian clearly states that the details of the description do not have to be historically true. The idea of verisimilitude prevails: *consequamur autem, ut manifesta sint, si fuerint verisimilia; et licebit etiam falso affingere fieri solet.*[40] Though it is plausible that Hellenistic literary critics originally borrowed the term ἐνάργεια from its use in Epicurean philosophy, which canonically defined ἐνάργεια as "the clear view",[41] the primary objective of this rhetorical technique is not the accurate representation of the outside world. Consequently, we are chiefly dealing with literary visualizations whose main purpose is to arouse emotions in the reader or audience. Certainly, historical accounts derived from autopsy may reflect the original philosophical meaning of ἐνάργεια. For instance, Polybius relates the value of autopsy to the trust contained in ἐνάργεια.[42] Similarly, many of Ammianus' vivid biographical accounts must be regarded as realistic. Indeed, I have included a selection of the most remarkable first-hand accounts in the first section of this chapter. However, as regards the most common literary significance of ἐνάργεια, as I have previously discussed, even a writer like Ammianus, who often relied on first-hand sources, could not neglect its stylistic potential. I have selected three fragments of the *RG* where the author has strongly relied on several rhetorical techniques, ἐνάργεια playing a vital role. The passages describe the following: the march of the Persian army as observed from a high cliff in Corduene, the evacuation of Nisibis in 363, and the arrest of the mob leader Peter Valvomeres.

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[39] Cicero *De inventione rhetorica* 1.21 (ed. and trans. Hubbell). See Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 4.2.31 (ed. and trans. Russell).
[40] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 8.3.70 (ed. and trans. Russell).
[41] Epicurus. *Epistulae* 1.82.3-7 (ed. and trans. Bailey). See Zanker, "Enargeia in Ancient Criticism of Poetry," 308-9.
[42] Polybius 20.12.8 (ed. and trans. Paton).

2.1. The Persian Army at Corduene

In 359, Ursicinus sent Ammianus to Jovinianus, Satrap of Corduene, to obtain detailed intelligence information about the Persian army; the Satrap, who had known Ammianus at Antioch, was well disposed towards the Romans, and his territory lay near the route taken by the Persian forces. From a high cliff and at a distance 75 km, Ammianus and his two companions were able to recognize the faces and dress of the army's leaders:

Ibi morati integrum biduum, cum sol tertius affulsisset, cernebamus terrarum omnes ambitus subiectos, quos ὁρίζοντας apellamus, agminibus oppletos innumeris, et antegressum regem vestis claritudine rutilantem. Quem iuxta laevus incedebat Grumbates, Chionitarum rex nervositate quidem media rugosisque membris, sed mente quadam grandifica, multisque victoriarum insignibus nobilis; dextra rex Albanorum, pari loco atque honore sublimis; post duces varii, auctoritate et potestatibus eminentes, quos ordinum omnium multitudo sequebatur, ex vicinarum gentium roboribus lecta, ad tolerandam rerum asperitatem diuturnis casibus erudita (18.6.22).

Ammianus presents the reader with a quasi-symmetric portrayal of the Persian army: king Sapor, leading the way and easily distinguishable by his glittering attire (*vestis claritudinem rutilantem*), is flanked by two other kings: Grumbates, king of the Chionitae, and the king of the Albani. Ammianus states that Gumbrates is a man of moderate strength and shrivelled limbs (*rugosis membris*). Subsequently, other leaders follow and, after them, the great multitude of foreign allies ending the picture. Though the historian often stresses personal virtues, particularly the courage and rank of the leaders, the main objective of the fragment is to visualize a scene by the division of a whole, a distant vast army, into discernible parts. In an impressionistic manner, only two

physical features, the brightness of the king's dress and Grumbates' bodily weakness, are largely responsible for the feeling of detailed visualization. Certainly, much of the information contained in the description, like the presence of foreign allies, could have been collected from other intelligence sources later on; however, the author's main concern is to display the reader a close image of the Persian threat for the first time. Thus, the stylistic impact of ἐνάργεια overlaps historical veracity. Moreover, Eunapius, as recorded by Zosimus, may have employed a similar literary trick. After sending a contingent of 18,000 soldiers to defend the Tigris frontier under the command of Sebastianus and Procopius, Julian, according to Eunapius, wished to view the army from a vantage point.[43] One may wonder whether Eunapius' version had included a detailed description of the troops. Further, as Dillemann has pointed out,[44] it is plausible that Ammianus may have been also inspired by an ancient scientific discussion about certain individuals being able to see at long distances. Cicero relates how at school one learns about a legendary man who was able to see at a great distance: *At ille nescio qui, qui in scholis nominari solet, mille et octigenta stadia quod abesset videbat: quaedam volucres longius*;[45] Pliny the Elder offers a complete account of Cicero's story: Marcus Varro, argues Pliny, knew this man's name, Strabo, stating that in the Punic wars he would report from the promontory of Lilybaeum in Sicily the actual number of ships of a fleet passing out from the harbour of Carthage.[46] This wonder is also recorded in Solinus' *Collectanea*, a work commonly dated to the third century A.D.[47] Both Pliny and Solinus had a great influence upon Ammianus' descriptions of natural wonders, particularly the

[43] Zosimus. 3.13.1 ff (ed. Mendelssohn).
[44] Dillemann, "Ammien Marcellin et le pays de l'Euphrate et du Tigre," 102.
[45] Cicero *Academicae quaestiones* 2.25.
[46] Pliny *Naturalis historia* 7.21 (ed. and trans. Rackham).
[47] Solinus *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* 1.99 (ed. Mommsen).

latter who, to a great extent, offered an accessible summary of Pliny's *Naturalis historia*.[48] Consequently, a learned reader would primarily appreciate the episode for its stylistic value in the employment of both ἐνάργεια and the subtle literary allusions that suggest that the episode is "scientifically" possible, its historical significance being secondary.[49]

2.2. The Evacuation of Nisibis.

The analysis of the historian's account of the forced evacuation of Nisibis offers further insights illustrating the mechanism of ἐνάργεια. The emperor Jovian, Julian's successor, gave up to Sapor the well-fortified city of Nisibis in 363. Ammianus' account of the tragic exodus is as follows:

Appositis itaque compulsoribus, mortem siqui distulerit egredi minitantibus, moenia permixta sunt lamentis et luctu, et per omnia civitatis membra una vox cunctorum erat gementium, cum laceraret crines matrona, exsul fuganda laribus in quibus nata erat et educata, orbataque mater liberis vel coniuge viduata, procul ab eorum manibus pelleretur, et turba flebilis postes penatium amplexa vel limina, lacrimabat. Exin variae complentur viae, qua quisque poterat dilabentium. Properando enim multi furabantur opes proprias quas vehi posse credebant, contempta reliqua supellectili, pretiosa et multa. Hanc enim reliquerunt penuria iumentorum (25.9.5-6).

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[48] See R. N. Mooney, "Natural Lore in Ammianus Marcellinus" *The Classical Bulletin* 33, no. 6 (1957): 61-68.

[49] The literary character of this passage has been accepted by most scholars. Thompson had pointed it out in his monograph on Ammianus, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, 7, and Rosen refers to the episode as an instance of "artistic representation" in "Studien zur Darstellungskunst und Glaubwürdigkeit des Ammianus Marcellinus," 34-35. To my knowledge, only N. J. E. Austin defends the historical veracity of the fragment, supplying an example from his own experience: from a hill of the mountainous areas of eastern Rhodesia, it is possible to see at dawn of a clear day the sun shining on the sea in the Moçambique Channel, a distance of 130 miles. See "In Support of Ammianus' Veracity," *Historia* 22, no. 2 (1973): 332. Even if we accept the possibility suggested by Austin, we would still need to explain how it would have been possible to recognize individuals.

The historian's description is greatly shaped by literary conventions, even though he had witnessed the episode himself. In fact, Ammianus was directly inspired by Livy's account of the forced mass departure from Alba Longa.[50] In a general sense, both historians deal with similar motifs: an extraordinary lament embracing the entire city is followed by an enumerative sequence of images of its inhabitants tragically abandoning their houses, temples and *penates*. Ammianus even echoes two sentences from Livy's description: *in quibus nata erat et educata* clearly recalls *in quibus natus quisque educatusque esset*; and *exĭn variae complentur viae* directly evokes *iam continens agmen migratium inpleverat vias*.[51] Indeed, Ammianus was fully aware of the stylistic possibilities of this particular episode that tragically exemplified the failure of Julian's Persian expedition; the historian, therefore, chose not to render a mere realistic testimony of what he saw, as he had often done when describing battles and campaigns in which he participated.

According to Quintilian's discussion of ἐνάργεια, there are two methods by which the visual vividness of a detailed description is achieved. In the first, the writer describes the whole image of the event by long sentences, without dividing the syntactic structure into small *isocola*.[52] In the second, the image the writer tries to convey is created by a greater number of details, so that the subject is not described as a whole, but in parts; syntactically, the text is fragmented into small *isocola* describing details of the event. This technique also received the name of λεπτολογία.[53] By the latter approach, argues Quintilian, the speaker best arouses a strong emotional response in his audience: "to tell

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[50] Livy *De urbe condita* 1.29.4-5 (ed. and trans. Foster). A similar discussion could be applied to Procopius' description of the siege of Amida in 502-3, which contains some similarities with Thucydides' account of the siege of Plataea in 429 B.C. Whereas the details of the evacuation of Nisibis are inspired by literary models, we should also acknowledge the overall historical value of this account. Indeed, verbal parallels should not obscure the fact that sieges and evacuations can resemble one another.

[51] See Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus II," 434-35.

[52] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 8.3.63 (ed. and trans. Russell).

[53] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 8.3.66; 9.2.40 (ed. and trans. Russell).

the whole thing (*totum*) is less than to tell everything (*omnia*)." Curiously, Quintilian is here giving instructions of how one should describe the sack of a city .[54] In the passage under examination, Ammianus clearly follows the second method suggested by Quintilian. If the vastness of the Persian army was hierarchically segmented into several close-ups of kings, leaders and troops, the historian now offers a mosaic of images of women in sorrow. Ammianus even goes further than Livy in terms of exhaustiveness. Whereas the latter refers to women in general, Ammianus writes about matrons, mothers and widows. To convey the idea of a powerful wailing filling every corner of the city, Ammianus first guides the reader towards the walls (*moenia*) of the city and, then, to its different parts (*membra*). The reader is subsequently presented with an enumeration of individualized images of mourning and desperation: matrons tearing their hair lament the approaching exile, and childless mothers and widows mourn that they are driven from the ashes of their loved ones. Then, Ammianus subtly suggests how the inhabitants are gradually forming a weeping throng (*turba flebilis*) that, after symbolically embracing doors and thresholds, leaves the city through various roads. The literary character of the passage is further emphasized by an implicit reference to Vergil's Trojans: *Tum pavidae tectis matres ingentibus errant/ amplexaque tenent postis atque oscula figunt.*[55] Formally, Ammianus' purpose is to create an impression of exhaustiveness, which is accomplished by figures of parallelism and by *variatio*. An example of parallelism is the pairing of words whose meaning is complementary: *lamentis et luctu* describe the grief in the city, and the possessions left behind are *pretiosa et multa*; further, the use of the conjunction

[54] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 8.3.69 (ed. and trans. Russell). The third-century rhetorician Aquila Romanus employs the term λεπτολογία. See *De figuris sententiarum et elocutionis*. 2.23.16-7, in *Rhetores Latini Minores*, ed. K. Halm (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1863), 22-37. Demetrius uses the term ἀκριβολογία to designate this technique of enumerative description. Demetrius *De elocutione* 209 (ed. and trans. Innes).
[55] Vergil *Aeneid* 2.489-90 (ed. and trans. Fairclough. Rev. Goold).

vel creates a similar effect: *orbataque mater liberis vel coniuge viduata* and *postes penatium amplexa vel limina*. Finally, *variatio* is the stylistic feature permeating the whole passage: the sorrow in the city is expressed by *lamenta*, *luctus* and *vox cunctorum gementium*; the ancestral religion is exemplified by the abandoned *lares* and *manes*; lastly, the houses are referred as *postes penatium* and *limina*.

In the analysis of the second method to achieve ἐνάργεια, Quintilian supplies as an illustration a passage from a lost speech of Cicero, the *Pro Gallio*.[56] It is significant that many of the stylistic features contained in Cicero's passage are also employed by Ammianus in the passage under examination: the scene is analysed into its constituent parts; an enumerative sequence dominates the composition; there are frequent figures of parallelism, *variatio* being the prevalent characteristic; lastly, short syntactic units are favoured. In a broader sense, these formal traits show great similarities to the literary style of late antiquity that, following the studies of J. Fontaine and M. Roberts, can be briefly defined as follows: the classical standards of organic unity, harmony and proportion of parts, are replaced by a taste for enumerative and schematic structures that turn the reader's attention from the whole to the brilliance of individual parts.[57] A type of ἐνάργεια exploiting exhaustive visual representations may have been a popular

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[56] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 8.3.66-7 (ed. and trans. Russell). The title is actually provided by Aquila Romanus. Having access to Cicero's speech, Aquila makes some minor modifications to Quintilian's fragment. See *De figuris sententiarum et elocutionis*. 2.23. 16-7, in *Rhetores Latini Minores*, ed. K. Halm (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1863), 22-37.

[57] Traditionally, studies on the language of Ammianus have mostly focussed on the historian's bilingualism, emphasizing, moreover, the non-classical features of his Latin style. In this sense, Barnes stresses the relevance of "the Greek template" to understand the intellectual background of the *RG*, and provides a great summary of previous scholarship on the subject. See *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 65-78. J. den Boeft argues that this Greek influence has been exaggerated, offering a more balanced examination. See "Ammianus graecissans?" 9-18. Further, authors like J. Fontaine and M. Roberts have examined Ammianus' work from a literary point of view, and conclude that there are a number of stylistic characteristics in the *RG* that perfectly match the style of late antique Latin, particularly the language of poetry. See Fontaine, "Unité et diversité du melange des genres," 425-82; Roberts, "The Treatment of Narrative in Late Antique Literature," 181-95.

descriptive technique among late antique authors. This is suggested by the testimony of the fifth-century rhetorician Nicolaus Sophista. He argues that ἔκφρασις narrates in parts whereas διήγεσις or *narratio*[58] recounts as a whole.[59] Since Nicolaus acknowledges only one form of ἐνάργεια, Quintilian's distinction between two types of ἐνάργεια is therefore lost.

2.3. The Arrest of Peter Valvomeres.

Ammianus' description of the popular disturbances at Rome during the prefecture of Fl. Leontius in 356 is as follows:

Dum has exitiorum communium clades suscitat turbo feralis, urbem aeternam Leontius regens, multa spectati iudicis documenta praebebat, in audiendo celerior in disceptando iustissimus, natura benevolus, licet auctoritatis causa servandae acer quibusdam videbatur, et inclinatior ad damnandum. Prima igitur causa seditionis in eum concitandae vilissima fuit et levis. Philoromum enim aurigam rapi praeceptum, secuta plebs omnis, velut defensura proprium pignus, terribili impetu praefectum incessebat ut timidum, sed stabilis et erectus, immissis apparitoribus, correptos aliquos vexatosque tormentis, nec strepente ullo nec obsistente, insulari poena multavit. Diebusque paucis secutis cum itidem plebs excita calore quo consuevit, vini caussando inopiam, ad Septemzodium convenisset, celebrem locum, ubi operas ambitiosi Nymphaeum Marcus condidit imperator, illuc de industria pergens praefectus, ab omni toga apparitioneque rogabatur enixius, ne in multitudinem se arrogantem immitteret et minacem, ex commotione pristina saevientem; difficilis ad pavorem, recta tetendit, adeo ut eum obsequentium pars desereret, licet in periculum festinantem abruptum. Insidens itaque vehiculo, cum speciosa fiducia contuebatur acribus oculis tumultuantium undique cuneorum, veluti serpentium vultus, perpessusque multa dici probrosa, agnitum quendam inter alios eminentem vasti corporis rutilique capilli, interrogavit, an ipse esset Petrus Valvomeres (ut audierat) cognomento; eumque cum esse sonu respondisset obiurgatorio, ut seditiosorum antesignanum olim sibi compertum, reclamantibus multis, post terga manibus vinctis, suspendi praecepit. Quo viso sublimi,

[58] In the context of forensic oratory, διήγεσις is the statement of facts; διήγεσις is also a preliminary exercise intended to compose a summarized narrative.
[59] 68.19-20. Felten. (1913).

tribuliumque adiumentum nequicquam implorante, vulgus omne paulo ante confertum, per varia urbis membra diffusum, ita evanuit ut turbarum acerrimus concitor, tamquam in iudiciali secreto exaratis lateribus, ad Picenum eiceretur, ubi postea ausus eripere virginis non obscurae pudorem, Patruini consularis sententia supplicio est capitali addictus (15.7.1-5).

The prefect Fl. Leontius caused riots by his arrest of Philoromus, a popular charioteer. Leontius managed to hold the charioteer in custody, despite the mob's attempts to get his release.[60] After Leontius had some of the rioters flogged and deported, the riots finally died down. However, a few days later there were more disturbances, the reason this time being a shortage of wine. On this occasion Leontius himself, deserted by part of his frightened attendants, boldly advanced on the crowd; the prefect identified and directly addressed the riot leader, Peter Valvomeres, who was immediately arrested, publicly flogged and, eventually, sent to exile to Picenum where, reports Ammianus, he was sentenced to death for raping a virgin of an illustrious family.

The pathos and visualization of the episode is emphasized by the use of semantic exaggeration and bodily images. For instance, a grandiloquent sentence opens the passage: the mob is introduced as a *turba feralis* causing calamities of general destruction: *exitiorum communium clades*; Peter Valvomeres is depicted as "this most doughty promoter of riots" (*turbarum acerrimus concitor*). It is remarkable that Ammianus underlines the prefect's stern attitude towards the crowd by a physical image: *sed ille stabilis et erectus*.[61] Further, the historian provides the reader with a visual image

[60] The evidence for these disturbances is found in André Chastagnol, *Les Fastes de la prefecture de Rome au Bas-Empire* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1962), 147-49.

[61] Here I follow Auerbach's translation: 'unerschüttert und hochgereckt'. Rolfe's translation is 'firm and resolute', missing, I believe, the strong bodily image the historian wants to projects in order to stress a dignified imperturbability. Hamilton's translation, 'stood his ground', is not satisfactory either. In the description of Constantius' arrival at Rome, the historian fully conveys this idea: "Accordingly, being

of the prefect inexorably marching towards the mob: *illuc de industria pergens praefectus* and *recte tetendit*. As he does in the description of the Persian army, the historian invites the reader to see the episode through the very eyes of the participants; Leontius carefully scans the crowd: *contuebatur acribus oculis*. Then, the visual character is again emphasized by some impressionistic details. The prefect, who had been previously depicted as standing up and unmoved, is now sitting in his carriage showing absolute confidence: *cum fiducia speciosa*. The reader is able to see his piercing eyes scrutinizing the crowd's faces. The prefect then identifies the leader, Peter Valvomeres, a man of great stature and red hair: *quendam inter alios eminentem vasti corporis rutilique capilli*. Lastly, the punishment is described visually; instead of merely using the common Latin verb for flogging, *flagellare*, Ammianus employs an affected periphrasis: *latera exarare*.

As we saw in the two previous passages, Ammianus has again succeeded in creating a high style language that, according to ancient literary theory, does not represent reality objectively. The main objective is to raise the emotions of the reader through the visualization of a scene. In the episode of Peter Valvomeres, the historian once more explores the technique of ἐνάργεια by an exhaustive description of the different elements of the scene, emphasizing the bodily features, as I pointed out above. The descriptive exhaustiveness is exemplified by the detailed characterization of the prefect Leontius, who is depicted by a great number of adjectives and participles: *regens, celer, iustissimus, benevolus, acer, inclinatior ad amandum, stabilis, erectus, pergens, difficilis ad pavorem* and *perpessus multa dici probrosa*; descriptive exhaustiveness is further highlighted by parallelism, which creates either semantic differentiation or

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saluted as Augustus with favouring shouts, while hills and shores thundered out the roar, he never stirred, but showed himself as calm and imperturbable as he was commonly seen in his provinces" (16.8.9).

variatio. For instance, the prefect's qualities as a judge are: *in audiendo celer, in disceptando iustissimus*; the *causa* for the plebs' revolt is *vilissima* and *levis*; with *plebs* go both *secuta* and *defensura propium pignum*; Leontius is *stabilis* and *erectus*; with *multitudinem*, which is described as *saevitiam* from the previous disturbance, goes the pair *arrogantem* and *minacem*. Syntactically, the passage is dominated by appositional structures fragmenting the whole into small units; the reader is never given a sense of a harmonic totality but through constant juxtaposition is guided to contemplate individual segments. The prefect, the mob and Peter Valvomeres are not syntactically integrated into long periods with their respective subordinate clauses; instead, they passively receive a great number of qualifiers in the form of adjectives and participles. An example of this stylistic approach is the clause: *Quo viso sublimi tribuliumque adiumentum nequicquam implorante*. Two appositive participles create a vivid image of Peter Valvomeres being taken aloft by the soldiers and vainly asking the mob for help. Semantically, both participles are perfectly integrated details of the same image; syntactically, the reader probably perceived the two ablative absolutes as independent units. In consequence, as I have suggested above, this style fully exploits the stylistic features of ἐνάργεια as well as reflects a wide-spread stylistic trend in the literature of late antiquity.

For the analysis of the aesthetic significance of this passage, we must recall Auerbach's famous study included in *Mimesis*. I now intend to argue that whereas Auerbach's insights into Ammianus' literary style are generally accurate, his observations on the relationship between literary style and environment need more detailed study. In addition, Auerbach's assessment to how Ammianus represented historical reality was strongly criticized by Matthews. Similarly, I find Matthews'

interpretation inadequate as he struggles to stress the historical veracity of the episode. Instead of focussing on the actual veracity of the episode, as both Auerbach and Matthews have done, I will again emphasize that the key to the interpretation of this passage, and to others of similar stylistic characteristics, lies in the manner Ammianus exploits the linguistic resources of ἐνάργεια. The peculiar stylistic approach described in the analysis of these three episodes is what actually distinguishes Ammianus from the work of previous historians.

Certainly, Auerbach's characterization of Ammianus' style as sensory and dark is largely accurate. The historian is too often concerned with arousing the emotions of the readers by displaying a wide spectrum of gloomy and theatrical images before their eyes. Auerbach supplies a great number of examples from the *RG* that show how the historian employs these stylistic features.[62] One of the passages that best illustrates this approach is the description of Procopius' proclamation as emperor in 365.

"So there he stood, pale as death (you would think that he had come up from the lower world), and because a purple robe could nowhere be found, he was dressed in a gold-embroidered tunic, like an attendant at court, but from foot to waist he looked like a page in the service of the palace; he wore purple shoes on his feet, and bore a lance, and a small piece of cloth in his left hand; just as sometimes on the stage you might think that a splendidly decorated figure was suddenly made to appear as the curtain was raised, or some mimic deception" (26.6.15).

Nevertheless, I have strong reservations whenever Auerbach establishes connections between the environment of the age and the peculiarities of Ammianus' literary style. Auerbach suggests a link between the "spectral reality of the age" and

[62] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 52 ff.

Ammianus' language.[63] It is not clear what Auerbach means by this sort of ghostlike reality. Plausibly, he refers to the political instability of the period, the sudden and often inexplicable outbreaks of popular violence, and death as witnessed by an experienced soldier like Ammianus. However, one could easily argue that this is as much the environment described in Tacitus' history. Moreover, Ammianus' numerous explicit descriptions of violence and death, which reflect real experiences, do not represent an artistic novelty. Let us for instance refer to an author commonly studied at school as an example of a "proper style" to imitate. Vergil often inserts scenes of violence depicted in detail and destined to raise horror in the reader. This is the effect sought through the account of the death of Laocoon and his sons,[64] and through the descriptions of numerous combat episodes of the second part of the *Aeneid*, like the nocturnal massacres committed by Nisus and Euryalus.[65] Auerbach's concept of "spectral reality" seems to reflect the stereotyped assumption that the fourth century is a cruel declining age carrying much of the blame for the syntactic idiosyncrasy and obscurity of Ammianus' language. Furthermore, Auerbach questions the historical value of the whole episode. The essential point of his thesis is that Ammianus employs a style that almost exclusively emphasizes the sensory and gestural aspects of human life, marginalizing the representation of rational behaviour. In Ammianus's treatment of this scene, explains Auerbach, the plebs becomes a mass of bodies whose relation with authority is based on magic and brute force. Auerbach concludes that the characteristics of Ammianus' style, "overrefined and

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[63] "With glittering words and pompously distorted constructions language begins to depict the distorted, gory, and spectral reality of the age." Ibid., 57.
[64] Vergil *Aeneid* 2.199-227 (ed. and trans. Fairclough. Rev. Goold).
[65] Vergil *Aeneid* 9.314-66 (ed. and trans. Fairclough. Rev. Goold).

sensory," provoke a distortion of reality.[66] Further, he also argues that the passage itself never answers fundamental questions about social and economic history.[67] From the stylistic point of view, I agree with Auerbach's assessment: Ammianus exclusively emphasizes the visual aspect. Indeed, the core of the scene contains clear theatrical elements. A brave man alone, a symbol of order and authority, confronts a rioting mob, which had been symbolically turned into serpents.[68] A unique moment of intimacy is created when Leontius addresses Valvomeres; further, the crowd is referred by the term *cuneus*, a word suggesting, among other connotations, the spectators of the theatre as well as a thick armed formation. Nevertheless, despite its theatrical exaggeration, the episode does provide a good illustration of the uncontrolled violence of the Roman mob, a real phenomenon that was already evident from the times of the late republic: a populace spoilt by the *commoda* would voice political discontent at the games and burst into violence at times of shortage of food supply.[69] Further, Ammianus offers other examples of mob rioting. For instance, during a grain shortage at Antioch, the mob tore to pieces Theophilus, *consularis Syriae*, and set fire to the house of a wealthy man called Eubulus (14.7.6). Even L. Aurelius Avianius Symmachus, who was a successful prefect of Rome in 364-5, was a victim of mob violence; a few years later, some worthless ruffian (*vilis*

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[66] "Judged by classical standards, the style, both in diction and syntax, is overrefined and exaggeratedly sensory, its effects are powerful but distorted. Its effects are as distorted as the reality it represents. Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 59.

[67] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 52 ff.

[68] On the animal imagery, see Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 25-27, 183-84. Cf. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 107-119.

[69] See Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976). For a general study of the administration of food and drink supply see Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 695-705; J. Palanque, "Famines à Rome a la fin du IVe siècle," *Revue des Études Anciennes* 63 (1961): 346-56. For the role of grain prices in provoking riots, particularly at Antioch, see R. W. Burguess, "Overlooked Evidence for Grain Prices in Antioch, A.D. 333," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 120 (1998): 295-98. For a recent general study of the Roman populace in Late Antiquity see N. Purcell, "The Populace of Rome in Late Antiquity," in *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity*, ed. William V. Harris and Javier Arce, 135-61 (Portsmouth, R.I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999). This study is particularly valuable as a compendium of the bibliography on the subject.

quidam plebeius) heard him say, at a time when there was a shortage of wine, that he would rather use his wine to quench lime-kilns than sell it at the low price requested by the people; the mob then set fire to his house across the Tiber (27.3.3-4).[70] The dramatic features of the popular revolt against Tertulus, prefect in 359, can be paralleled with Leontius' episode: as bad weather has been preventing the import of grain, an uncontrolled populace attempts to destroy Tertulus, who, with tears (*lacrimans*) ultimately manages to calm the multitude by delivering an emotional speech while holding his little sons (19.10.3).

Auerbach is again right about the fact that Ammianus never analyzes the actual reasons behind the mob disturbances.[71] The historian merely focuses on the immediate causes, which he judges as trivial pretexts: the arrest of a charioteer and the alleged scarcity of wine (15.7.2-3).[72] Although in each of his two Roman digressions Ammianus includes a section on the plebs, the historian's approach is rather superficial, simply

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[70] This was an excuse for rioting. Actually, on the evidence of the elder Pliny it has been argued that wine could be employed to prepare a kind of waterproof cement for the construction of bathing-pools. See J. Rougé, "Une émeute à Rome au IVe siècle. Ammien Marcellin XXVII.3.3-4: Essai d'interprétation," *Revue des Études Anciennes* 63 (1961): 59-67. Pliny *Naturalis historia.* 36.181 (ed. and trans. Rackham).

[71] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 52 ff.

[72] As regards other popular riots, the historian takes the same superficial approach. For instance, Ammianus never explains the real causes of the food crisis at Antioch in 353 (14.7.5-6); he vaguely states that the reasons for the imminent famine were difficult to explain (*per multas difficilisque causas*). Thompson explains that the Antiochene landowners, who were also the *curiales*, were the main food suppliers of the city, and outrageously manipulated the prices. See *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, 61. Further, as P. De Jonge argues, a situation of scarcity would be further aggravated by the army, whose presence made prices rise; Ammianus does not mention this circumstance. See "Scarcity of Corn and Corn Prices in Ammianus Marcellinus," *Mnemosyne* 4, no. 1 (1948): 240-42. Nine years later, Julian had to deal with a similar crisis at Antioch (22.14.1-2). To explain Julian's measures the historian says that he wished to lower the prices of grain from a desire of popularity. The whole story was more complicated than that. Julian imported grain from neighbouring cities and Egypt, and sold it at a fixed low price. The landowners secretly sold other provinces the grain they had originally offered at a high price; at the same time they bought the cheap grain Julian imported. See Julian, *Misopogon.* 368c-370a (ed. and trans. Wright). While referring to the previous crisis during Gallus' reign, Julian states that the populace's reaction against the *curiales* was justified. Julian *Misopogon* 370c (ed. and trans. Wright). Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, 61-62. The historian's failure to assess the food crisis objectively, argues Thompson, is only comprehensible by assuming a class bias towards the *curiales*. Hence, the historian criticizes Julian's measures to expand the curial order with rich and influential Antiochenes, so that their members would undertake fewer duties (21.12.23; 25.4. 21).

echoing well-known stereotypes about the impoverished lower classes spending their existence idly in taverns, the theatre and at chariot races (14.6.25-6; 28.4.28-34). Yet ancient historians on the whole fail to comprehend, or represent, economic and social changes, the role of the plebs being ignored. In consequence, regarding this matter Auerbach's criticism of Ammianus is unfair. Ammianus' historical treatment is not dramatically different from the approach of previous historians. Additionally, Auerbach's comparison of the episode of Peter Valvomeres with Tacitus' representation of the revolt of the Germanic legions is misleading;[73] if Tacitus represents the soldiers as "humans beings of a definite culture and with a definite sense of honour,"[74] it is also true that from the times of the early empire the army was clearly perceived by ancient writers as playing a direct role in imperial politics.

As I pointed out above, Matthews wrote a revisionist article on Auerbach's study of Ammianus' literary style. He notes that what Auerbach judges as an excessive emphasis on pictorial effect and gesture may be an accurate reflection of some features of life in Late Antiquity, with its taste for excessive ceremony. Furthermore, he suggests that the episode of Peter Valvomeres is just one example of how public opinion was expressed. In other words, Ammianus' style would be echoing the language of public demonstrations, such as protests at the games or street rioting, as well as the language of organized acclamations on places of assembly.[75] I consider Matthews's examination unsatisfactory. The behaviour of the unruly mob as described by Ammianus contradicts

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[73] Tacitus *Annales*. 1.16 ff (ed. and trans. Jackson).
[74] Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 52.
[75] John Matthews, "Peter Valvomeres, Re-Arrested," in *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble*, ed. J. C. Bramble et al., 277-84 (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press; Oak Park, Ill.: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1987).

the principles of ritual and ceremony.[76] To my knowledge, there are only two occasions in the *RG* when, according to Matthews' idiom, the language of the historian largely expresses the actual articulation of social relations in the Rome of the fourth century. First, it is very plausible that Ammianus' pictorial description of the ostentatious behaviour of the Roman nobility contains a certain degree of historical veracity. Second, Ammianus' account of Constantius' *adventus* at Rome closely follows the protocol of the actual ceremony as it is often described by the panegyrical literature. I do not see, however, why the episode of the arrest of Peter Valvomeres should be included in this category. It can be argued that Ammianus attempted to portray Valvomeres as an individual contradicting the principles of ritual and ceremony, which Leontius is attempting to restore. In other words, popular outcries should follow certain rules of engagement. But this thesis is not based on the text itself but on what the historian might have implied. It is more likely that Leontius' resolute behaviour towards the mob illustrates a common literary motif: a powerful ruler is able to control a violent crowd. In the first simile of the *Aeneid*, for instance, Vergil compares the action of Neptune, who quells the winds let loose by Aeolus in order to force the ships of Aeneas on the shores of Carthage, with the almost hypnotic power of a noble individual, a representative of authority at all times, who manages to tame the wild outbreak of violence amongst a crowd.[77] We should not forget that Ammianus characterizes the prefect Leontius with the monumental clause: *urbem aeternam Leontius regens*.

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[76] It is plausible that this particular riot had a ritualistic nature. In general, the notion of a language of popular protest, expressed through rioting and chants, is not impossible. See Geoffrey Greatrex, "The Nika Riot: A Reappraisal," *Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 117 (1997): 61-2. However, my point is that Ammianus' literary representation does not echo these ceremonial features in the description of the arrest of Valvomeres.

[77] Vergil *Aeneid.* 1.148-56 (ed. and trans. Faiclough. Rev. Goold).

Consequently, arguments proposing a close link between the historical reality of the period and Ammianus' artistic representation—such as those proposed by Auerbach and Matthews—are not satisfactory to explain the stylistic peculiarities displayed in the account of the arrest of Peter Valvomeres. I have challenged the views indicating that a ghostlike reality produces a spectral style, or that ritual and ceremonial elements of fourth- century life determined the description of this particular episode. As my linguistic analysis of the three passages clearly suggest, the interpretation of these episodes lies in how the historian articulated the rhetorical device of 'ενάργεια. according to the stylistic fashions of the period.

CONCLUSION

I have shown how passages from the *RG* clearly suggest that Ammianus heavily relied on the use of first-hand sources. Both his own experience as a soldier and the testimony from informants played a central role in the composition of his narrative.

In the three passages studied above, Ammianus uses the rhetorical device ἐνάργεια in order to bring the scene before the eyes of the reader. The main purpose of ἐνάργεια is to emphasize the πάθος of the episode. Additionally, Ammianus exploits a type of ἐνάργεια Quintilian had categorized as the second type: it focuses on the detailed description of each part of the scene rather than focussing on the whole. As the testimony of the fifth-century rhetor Nicolaus Sophista suggests, authors of Late Antiquity viewed ενάργεια as exclusively the second kind described by Quintilian. I have argued that an examination of how Ammianus articulates the rhetorical possibilities of ἐνάργεια offers the key to understanding how the historian represents reality. Additionally, by echoing

Livy's account of the forced mass departure from Alba Longa, he does not hesitate to incorporate the historiographical tradition in his historical narrative. Finally, instead of concentrating on the relationship between historical reality and its representation, as Auerbach and Matthews have done, I propose that we should focus on how the historian exploits certain stylistic features.

3

THE SOURCES OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHIC DIGRESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

Ammianus employed a great variety of written sources for the cultural digressions. He used official lists of Roman provinces and, for the eastern regions, Ptolemy's *Geography* (22.8.10). He also employed Festus' *Breviarium*, topographical manuals, the works of Solinus, Pliny the Elder, Dionysius of Alexandria, Cicero (15.12.4), Caesar (15.11.6), Sallust (15.12.6), Timagenes (15.9.2), Homer (27.4.3), Herodotus (22.15.28), Eratosthenes (22.8.10), Hecataeus (22.8.10), Plato (23.6.32) Pythagoras (15.9.8), Thucydides (23.6.75), and many others (15.11.4; 22.8.10).[1] Ammianus also states that he included what he himself saw or heard from others. In his

[1] T. Mommsen wrote a systematic analysis of the variety of sources, stressing the importance of Ptolemy: "Ammians Geographica," *Hermes* 16 (1881): 602-36. In his work, Mommsen criticizes the view of V. E. Gardthausen, who suggested that Ammianus used a single handbook source. See *Die geographischen Quellen Ammians* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1873), 509-56. For the sources of the digressions on the Pontic regions see I. Gualandri, "Fonti geographiche di Ammiano Marcellino XXII, 8," *Parola del Passato* 23 (1968), 199-211. Gualandri argues that the historian drew from many literary sources, mostly Greek, and that the digression is a *periplus* rather than a scientific geography. For the digression on Persia, see M. F. A. Brok, "Die Quellen von Ammians Excurs über Persien," *Mnemosyne* ser. 4, 28 (1975): 47-56. Though Brok challenges Mommsen's suggestion of Ptolemy as Ammianus' source, he agrees with Mommsen on the multiplicity of literary sources used by the historian. As regards the excursus on siege engines (23, 4), it is not a product of direct observation, but a literary *tour du force*, as Daniël den Hengst argues in "Preparing the Reader for War: Ammianus' Digression on Siege Engines," in *The Late Roman World and its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcelinus*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers, and David Hunt, 29-39 (London: Routledge, 1999). Concerning the passages on flora and fauna, most of them inserted in the digression on Egypt (22.15-16), they derive from other writers, especially from Pliny and Solinus. Mommsen argues that the verbal similarities between Solinus and Ammianus are particularly marked, suggesting that both authors drew from the *Chrorographia Pliniana*, a lost work that compiles Pliny and Pomponius Mela and was written during the reign of Hadrian or Antonius Pius. See Theodor Momsen, ed. *C. Iulii Solini collectanea rerum memorabilium* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1958), xvii-xxiii. See Mooney, "Natural Lore in Ammianus Marcellinus," 61-68. For an examination of the literary and historical role of the digressions, see U. Richter, "Die Funktion der Digressionen im Werk Ammians," *Würzburger Jahrbücher für Altertumswissenchaft* 15 (1989): 209-22.

digressions on Thrace and the Pontic Sea, the historian says that they are derived "partly from my own observation and partly from reading" (22.8.1). I intend to show to what extent this assertion is a valid methodological statement.

In the tradition of ancient historiography, the cultural digressions were a way for the author to display his knowledge and interests on a wide range of subjects to his readers and listeners.[2] In the *RG*, we can identify the following topics: ethnography, geography, science and natural phenomena, natural history, antiquities, religion, and philosophy. An exhaustive study of each digression would require another dissertation. Therefore, I will exclusively focus on an examination of the ethnographic and geographical digressions. They are excellent representatives of this genre, and fully illustrate my argumentation concerning the impact of rhetoric and education on the *RG*.[3]

This chapter is divided into five main sections. First, I intend to assess the intellectual significance of having such a large number of cultural digressions included in a work of history. Second, I will examine the role of observation in the composition of some of the ethnographic and geographic digressions. Third, I will argue that the impact of written sources and rhetorical conventions played a decisive role in the composition of the ethnographic digressions, seriously distorting the representation of historical reality. Fourth, I will inquire about the role of cartography in the writing of the geographical descriptions. And fifth, I will examine the role of education in the public reception of Ammianus' geographical digressions.

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[2] For examples of how this intellectual attitude is manifested in Ammianus' digressions, see Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, 525-28.

[3] The topics of Ammianus' digressions on ethnography and geography are as follows: the Saracens (14.4. 1-7), the eastern provinces (14.8.1-15), the Rhine flowing into Lake Constance (15.4.1-6), Gaul (15.9-12), Julian's campaign in the East (21.10.2-4), Thrace and the Pontic sea (22.8.1-48), Egypt (22.15-16), the eighteen provinces of Persia (23.6), the six provinces of Thrace (27.4.1-14) and the Huns, Alans, and other people of Scythia (31.2).

1. THE INTELLECTUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIGRESSIONS

The length and number of ethnographic and geographic digressions employed by Ammianus is unparalleled in Latin historiography. In light of this, Matthews argues that both the content and sources of these digressions place the historian within the Greek intellectual tradition. Matthews further argues that, for instance, whereas Tacitus' social status automatically gives him the right and authority to be heard, Ammianus' claims for literary prestige would be justified by the Greek historiographical attitude that emphasizes the role of personal observation.[4] Surely, the ancient reader would easily detect the direct influence of Greek authors on the *excursus*. In his digression on Egypt, Ammianus introduces a description of the Hippopotami and their cunning behavior. The historian then reports what the inhabitants of the area around Memphis thought as the cause for the disappearance of these animals: they fled to the land of the Blemmyes out of fear of being hunted (22.15.24). Following the example of Herodotus, therefore, Ammianus reveals himself as a curious traveler willing to echo a fascinating local story. It is indeed significant that within the same geographical context the historian mentions Herodotus as the main source for the construction of the pyramids (22.15.28).[5] Further, in the context of the digression on the Alans, people living at the verge of the civilized Roman world, Ammianus borrows from the work of Herodotus (31.2.14 ff)[6] his

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[4] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 464.

[5] However, some scholars doubt that Herodotus actually visited those non-Greek areas. See D. Fehling, *Herodotus and His Sources: Citation, Invention, and Narrative Art*, trans. J. Howie (Liverpool: Cairns, 1989); O. K. Armayor, "Did Herodotus Ever Go to the Black Sea?" *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 82 (1978): 45-62.

[6] Herodotus 4.102 ff (ed. and trans. Godley).

references to other barbaric people, the Nervi, Vidini, Geloni, Agathyrsi, Melanchlanae and the Anthropophagi. Moreover, Timagenes of Alexandria, writing in the first century B.C., is Ammianus' main authority for the ethnography of Gaul (15.9) and the description of the Alps (15.10).[7] Indeed, the historian explicitly acknowledges his debt to the Greek author:

> The ancient writers, in doubt as to the earliest origin of the Gauls, have left an incomplete account of the matter, but later Timagenes, a true Greek in carefulness as well as language, collected out of various books these facts that were long unknown; which, following his authority, and avoiding any obscurity, I shall state clearly and plainly (15.9.2).

One may wonder whether Ammianus' qualification of Timagenes as *et diligentia Graecus et lingua* could be somehow paralleled with the historian's famous words in the epilogue: *ut miles quondam et Graecus* (31.16.9). Initially, we may be tempted to recall Matthews' thesis: the historian would be confidently affirming his status as a Greek intellectual. According to Matthews' view, Ammianus would not be modestly apologizing for his peculiar Latin usage or the fact that a former soldier may not project the image of a polished intellectual. One may wonder whether this claim is actually accurate. For instance, a "Greek intellectual" would show a good knowledge of Greek literary sources, particularly Herodotus and Thucydides. As I explained in chapter 1, although the text of the *RG* reveals that Ammianus had a good knowledge of Homer, the other references to Greek writers are so vague that it is often difficult to trace the original passages. Conversely, Latin sources play a more pervasive role, acting not only as erudite

[7] For a discussion of the sources with references to previous works, see Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 96-99.

echoes but also as an active part within the historical narrative.[8] Besides, we also need to ask what it meant to be a Greek intellectual in Rome at the end of the fourth century. As Marrou has forcibly argued, a decline in bilingual education had already begun after Cicero's times.[9] That the teaching of Greek was gradually dying out in the West during the fourth century is well exemplified by the young Symmachus, a brilliant orator and the leader of a literary circle whose knowledge of Greek, however, was rather poor. The cultural expectations of the Roman intellectual elite of the fourth century hardly resemble those of the early empire, when the recipients of a bilingual education openly acknowledged the superiority of the Greek legacy.[10] It would be misleading to confine Ammianus' frequent use of cultural digressions strictly to a Greek tradition. In fact, it is well known that there was a widespread interest in this sort of encyclopaedic knowledge among the educated classes of the western empire in the fourth century. A long tradition of Vergilian scholarship culminates in Servius' *Commentaries*, a work that, aside from being a study of grammar, rhetoric and poetics, includes numerous notes on history, geography and mythology. The fact that Ammianus widely uses Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* may be a sign of the popularity of this type of encyclopaedic work.[11] Similarly, Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, which often echoes passages from the *Noctes Atticae*, is also an illustration of the public taste for Graeco-Roman antiquities. Perhaps the best instance to illustrate this intellectual attitude is the *Expositio totius mundi*, a description of the Roman world written by a traveler, probably a merchant, during the reign of Constantius.

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[8] Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus II," 420-38.
[9] Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 259-62.
[10] See Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*, 13-47, 131-48. For Symmachus' knowledge of Greek see also John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A.D. 364-425* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975. Reprint, Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 5, n. 3. For Augustine's see Henri Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1938), 27-46.
[11] Hertz, "Aulus Gellius und Ammianus Marcellinus," 257-302.

In a broader sense, digressions on exotic places within the empire, or on people living beyond the civilized world, had been always an attractive subject for the Roman reader. They were often inserted in poems, histories and scientific works. Apart from its informative value, the cultural excursus was also a weapon of propaganda which, like the exotic animals and foreign prisoners exhibited in the arena, showed the territorial reach of the empire. Pliny's *Naturalis historia*, a work Ammianus used through Solinus' compilation, is a good example. The scientific enquiry of Pliny forms part of a larger scheme that includes the praise of Roman power and communication. For instance, the praise of Roman imperialism is illustrated in Pliny's detailed description of a triumphal arch, erected in the Alps and recording the races from the Adriatic to the Mediterranean that the Romans had subjected.[12] Consequently, the historian incorporated the didactic and technical tradition of Latin literature into the genre of historiography. Ammianus merely incorporated more digressional material than previous Roman historians.

2. THE ROLE OF OBSERVATION

Ammianus' military career did not end following the failure of Julian's campaign in Persia.[13] Between 363 and his arrival in Rome at the beginning of the 380s, Ammianus

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[12] Pliny *Naturalis historia* 3.20 (ed. and trans. Rackham).

[13] According to the scholarly consensus, Ammianus left the army in 363, after the failure of the Persian campaign, in which the emperor Julian had died. However, Trombley has successfully challenged the traditional view. A study of the epigraphic evidence, explains Trombley, indicates that the average time in the military service of *protectores domestici* was 28.8 years. He concludes that during those trips, which provided abundant material for the ethnographic and geographic digressions, Ammianus was in charge of the army provisions. See F. Trombley, "Ammianus and Fourth Century Warfare," in *The Late Roman World and its Historian*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and David Hunt (London: Routledge: 1999), 20-21, n. 16. Dillemann argues that the historian was in charge of the provisions during the Persian campaign. The historian mentions any single event related with the food supply of the army, and most of them, explains Dillemann, are not recorded by Zosimus. Dillemann notes that a *protector domesticus* could perform these

traveled extensively. As I will show, it is likely that the historian inserted what he himself saw in the composition of some of his cultural digressions. He traveled through Greece where he saw a ship that had been hurled almost two miles inland near Methone, Laconia, by the under-sea earthquake on 21 July 365 (26.10.19). He traveled in Egypt during the same period (17.4.6; 22.15.1). He was also on the coasts of Thrace and the Black Sea (22.8.1; 27.4.2), and crossed the Balkans touring the area where confrontations before the battle of Adrianople (on the 9th of August 378) developed. He saw the bones of Romans and Goths who died in a battle near Marcianople in the Fall of 377 (31.7.16).

After criticizing the obscurity and confusion of earlier writers, Ammianus states that his own experience is the main source for the excursus on the six provinces of Thrace: ... "it will suffice to set forth what I myself recall seeing" (27.4.2). In the digression on Persia, he uses his experience to challenge what former authors wrote about the origin of the name Adiabena—from the Greek διαβαίνειν: "But I myself say that there are two perpetually flowing rivers to be found in these lands, the Diabas and Adiabas, which I myself have crossed," ... (23.6.21). Ammianus passed through Alexandria in order to reach the upper Nile. He describes the Serapeum in detail and refers to the intellectual life of the city, mentioning the prestige of the mathematical and medical studies still thriving there (22.16.7 ff). Further, Ammianus states that the temples and pyramids of Egypt were among the things worth seeing (22.15.28). He also declares having seen obelisks with hieroglyph inscriptions in Thebes (17.4.6). As regards the excursus on Gaul, he mentions having seen the inscription describing the mythical origins of Gaul (15.9.6). He saw the huge ancient walls of Autun (15.11.11) and the remains of

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duties, as the example of Antoninus shows (23.5.1). See "Ammien Marcellin et le pays de l'Euphrate et du Tigre," 95 ff, 143.

Aventicum (15.11.12). Lastly, in his description of the passes of the Alps, the historian writes as someone who is viewing the landscape from the top of a mountain: "But from the peak of this Italian slope a plateau extends for seven miles, as far as the post named from Mars" (15.10.6).

3. THE ROLE OF LITERARY SOURCES AND RHETORIC IN THE ETHNOGRAPHIC DIGRESSIONS

First-hand sources were not the main inspiration for the digressions. On the contrary, literary sources had a greater impact on these passages. In this section, I will show that the fact that Ammianus heavily relied on literary sources distorted his representation of historical reality. In the study of literary sources, I will pay special attention to the way ancient authors introduced rhetorical conventions and cultural stereotypes.

As regards the rhetorical conventions, we must mention the description of cities. They are artificially depicted according to rhetorical precepts that can be found in treatises such as the one composed by Menander Rhetor.[14] In the description of Alexandria, "the greatest of all cities" (*vertex omnium civitatum*), Ammianus includes all the different topics an orator was expected to cover when delivering a panegyric of a city: foundation, history, monuments, advantages of its location, and reasons for its world reputation that, in the case of Alexandria, were the fame of its philosophers and artists, as well as the prestige of its scientific education (22.16.7-13).

[14] *Menander Rhetor* 1. 346-67 (ed. and trans. Russell and Wilson).

Following the intellectual tradition of writers such as Strabo, Herodotus and Tacitus, Ammianus also employs literary commonplaces to describe people living in the margins of the empire as both uncivilized and barbaric. In other words, the historian often meets the prejudiced views of the literary public. As A. D. Lee notes, barbarians are frequently described as a negative representation of the traditional values of Graeco-Roman culture.[15] For instance, the Saracens are "warriors of equal rank, half-nude, clad in dyed cloaks as far as the waist, ranging widely with the help of swift horses and slender camels in times of peace or disorder" (14.4.3). Instead of agricultural work, "they rove continually over wide and extensive tracts without a home, without fixed adobes or laws" (14.4.3). And their sexual life is certainly peculiar: "the future wife, by way of a dower, offers her husband a spear and a tent, with the right to leave him after a stipulated time, if she so elect: and it is unbelievable with what ardor both sexes give themselves up to passion" (14.4.4).

Although Thrace had been part of the Graeco-Roman world for several centuries when Ammianus composed the *RG*, Ammianus sought a similar rhetorical effect in his depiction of the Odrysae and Scordisci:

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[15] A. D. Lee, *Information and Frontiers: Roman Foreign Relations in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 101-5. For an examination of this intellectual approach in Greek literature, see F. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. J. Lloyd (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989); Jaqueline de Romilly, "Les barbares dans la pensée de la Grèce classique," *Phoenix* 47, no. 4 (1993): 283-92. Alain Chauvot, *Opinions romaines face aux barbares au IVe siècle ap. J.-C.* (Paris: De Boccard, 1998). For the impact of this intellectual attitude on the Roman literary tradition, see Y. A. Dauge, *Le Barbare: Recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation*, Latomus 176 (Brussels: Latomus, 1981). As T. E. J. Wiedeman notes, bestiality is not an exclusive characteristic of the non-Roman barbarians as described in the *RG*. The historian applies animal metaphors to any person or group he disapproves. See "Between Men and Beasts: Barbarians in Ammianus Marcellinus, in *Past Perspectives: Studies in Greek and Roman Historical Writing*, ed. I. S. Moxon, J. D. Smart, and A. J. Woodman, 189-201 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

These regions also were occupied in former times by barbarians, who differed from one another in customs and language. Of these the Odrysae are noted for their savage cruelty beyond all others, being so habituated to the shedding of human blood that when there were no enemies at hand, at their feast, after a satiety of food and drink they plunged the sword into the bodies of their own countrymen, as if they were those of foreigners (28.4.9); a people (the Scordici) formerly cruel and savage, and, as ancient history declares, accustomed to offer up their prisoners as victims to Bellona and Mars, and from their hollowed skulls greedily to drink human blood (27.8.47).

Ammianus applied similar stereotypes in his description on the Huns, even though, as the historian himself states, these people were relatively new to the Roman reader: *monumentis veteribus leviter nota* (31.2.1). The excursus supposedly depicts the Huns as they were when they entered Europe in 376. Ammianus' detailed description, which includes origin, physical appearance and customs, highlights their monstrosity and barbarism: *omnem modum feritatis excedit* (31.2.1). The Huns are originally from the cold lands beyond the Maeotic Sea. Their faces are scarred and beardless from the cuts inflicted in them at birth. They have thick necks and powerful limbs, and wear rough clothing that is never washed or changed, but kept until it falls in pieces. They eat wild roots and raw meat that they warm by sitting on it as they ride their horses. They are fierce brigand-like warriors, but lack a clear system of leadership and government. They have no agriculture, but live in wagons, in which they move around. In addition, following the customary characterization of uncivilized nations among Roman writers, the historian states that the Huns completely lack religion: *nullius religionis vel superstitionis reverentia aliquando districti* (31.2.1-11).

It is likely that more information on the Huns had been available to Ammianus after the year 376. Actually, Jerome and Eunapius—as recorded by Zosimus—give some

details about the Huns. Based on the nature of the textual similarities between the three authors as well as on the dates of publication of the relevant works, Blockley convincingly shows that the three authors employed a common source, perhaps written, which collected rumors greatly shaped by cultural prejudice and rhetorical exaggeration.[16] While Thompson emphasized the overall accuracy of this digression, subsequent scholarship has convincingly identified serious mistakes in the historian's description, revealing that the writer is merely reflecting common literary clichés about nomadic people.[17]

Ammianus' cultural prejudice is not restricted to people located beyond the frontiers of the empire. In fact, his description of the Gauls is almost exclusively based on the literary tradition. The fact that they are depicted as a strong bellicose race greedy for wine (15.12.1-4) largely echoes the stereotype of the uncivilized barbarian frequently employed by Tacitus in his *Germania*. Ammianus might also have included his own personal experience. As Barnes argues, the historian was probably among the group of foreigners (*globus peregrinorum*) involved in a tavern dispute in which a large Gallic woman, with swollen neck and gnashing teeth (*tum maxime cum illa inflata cervice*), generously punches and kicks her opponents (15.12.1).[18] Nevertheless, Ammianus' statement about the wits of the Gauls being dulled by continuous drunkenness is supported by a direct reference to Cicero's defense of Fonteius (15.12.4)[19] suggesting that, overall, the passage perfectly fits within a literary tradition about the boorishness of

[16] Blockley, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 172-82.
[17] See Appendix 4.
[18] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 100.
[19] Cicero *Pro Fonteio* 4. 8 (ed. and trans. Watts).

the Gauls. In his defense of Fonteius, a governor of Gallia Transalpina who had allegedly plundered the local population, Cicero dismissed the accusers as mere barbarians:

> If, on the other hand, it is proper to consider the characters of individuals (and this surely must be of the highest importance in a witness), is any of the most honourable native of Gaul to be set on the same level with even the meanest citizen of Rome, let alone with the highest men of our commonwealth? Does Indutiomarus know what is meant by giving evidence? When he is brought into the witness-box, is he affected by that sense of awe from which none of us is exempt? [20]

However, the cultural diversity of Gaul that Caesar had briefly described is also acknowledged by Ammianus. In a strong contrast to the Belgae, the most valiant people according to ancient writers (15.11.4), the Aquitanians, argues Ammianus, are a peaceful trading nation whose character has been weakened to effeminacy (5). Furthermore, there was also a positive tradition regarding the intellectual curiosity of the Gauls. Caesar, for instance, reports that the lively spirit of the Gauls is manifested in a curiosity about distant lands, an eagerness to learn from travelers, whom they would detain to ask them many questions on every subject.[21] Caesar also testifies to their exceptional cleverness.[22] Diodorus Siculus is as clear,[23] and Clement of Alexandria, when attempting to argue that the Greeks did not have the monopoly of philosophy, stated that the Gauls preceded and even instructed the Greeks in this subject.[24] The intellectual reputation of Gaul in the fourth century is well attested by the poet Claudian who applies the adjective *doctus* to its citizens,[25] and Symmachus, a correspondent of the Gallic poet and orator Ausonius, who

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[20] *Pro Fonteio* 12.27 (ed. and trans. Watts).
[21] Caesar *Bellum Gallicum* 4.5. (ed. and trans. Edwards).
[22] Ibid., 6.22.
[23] Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca historica* 5.31 (ed. and trans. Oldfather *et alii*).
[24] Clemens Alexandrinus *Stromateis* 8.776-7(Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Graeca* 8-9).
[25] *Panegyricus de quarto consulatu Honorii Augusti.* 582 (ed. and trans. Platnauer).

wishes to have a Gallic tutor for his son at Rome.[26] Indeed, Ammianus to a certain extent echoes this tradition as he acknowledges that the poets, Euhages and Druids contributed to the gradual civilization of Gaul as well as to the flourishing of the liberal studies (15:9.8).[27] Nevertheless, Ammianus does not make any direct reference to more contemporary issues such as the outstanding character of the Gallic schools in the fourth century.

Similarly, Ammianus' long digression on Parthia (23.1-88) is strongly based on previous literary tradition (23.6.1), particularly on the accounts of Strabo and Pliny the Elder.[28] As other writers before him, Ammianus echoes certain misconceptions, failing to make a distinction between Medes, Persians, Parthians, and other eastern ethnic groups.[29] More specifically, he establishes an early date for the military hegemony of the Parthians over the Seleucids: according to Graeco-Roman historiography, Arsaces was the founder of the Parthian empire. Occasionally, the historian displays the kind of ambivalence we previously observed in his treatment of the Gauls: while he expresses admiration for the Parthian military might, especially manifested in the portrayal of Arsaces as the ideal Hellenistic sovereign, the historian overall depicts this region as a marginal land, as the cultural antithesis of the civilized Romans. For instance, he emphasizes the "obscure origins" of Arsaces and his successors (23.6.2, 5).

To sum up: Ammianus prefers to draw from literary stereotypes rather than relying on first-hand accounts, including his own experience. This intellectual attitude is

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[26] Symmachus *Epistulae.* 4.34 (ed. Seeck).
[27] Strabo also refers to these three groups: the Bards are poets; Euhages are diviners and natural philosophers; and the Druids studied natural and moral philosophy. See Strabo 4.4.4 (ed. and trans. Jones).
[28] For this particular section, I am greatly indebted to Jan Willem Drijvers, "Ammianus' Image of Arsaces and Parthia," in *The Late Roman World and Its Historian,* ed. Jan Willem Drjivers and David Hunt (Routledge: London, 1999), 193-206.
[29] Ibid., 200, n. 36.

also applicable to his digression on the Huns, even though a description of these people was a relatively new subject lacking a long tradition. Indeed, readers of the *RG* may have enjoyed the way Ammianus depicted exotic regions and people. For instance, the Roman elite had customarily preferred relying on elaborated rhetoric of the ethnographic tradition rather than on information derived from contemporary exploration.[30]

4. THE ROLE OF CARTOGRAPHY IN THE GEOGRAPHIC DIGRESSIONS

4.1. Global Maps in the *Res Gestae*

We must first acknowledge that the topographical descriptions of places Ammianus had visited are often confused and that there are some embarrassing mistakes. For instance, it is difficult to believe that Ammianus could place the river Durance on the wrong side of the Alps, although he had probably seen it.[31] Nevertheless, within the context of previous geographical accounts, Ammianus offers a more empirical approach: he occasionally corrects the literary tradition and there are fewer mistakes regarding distances and location. One may attribute this approach to Ammianus' military experience. Further, one may also wonder whether Ammianus, a high ranking soldier who had the opportunity to travel extensively in espionage missions, in different military campaigns and as a provision officer, possessed some knowledge of cartography, which he would have applied in composing these digressions. In a broader context, we must also

[30] This view is convincingly argued by Susan P. Mattern for the period between the battle of Actium, in 31 B.C., and the fall of Alexander Severus in 235. Mattern's analysis is still relevant to Ammianus' use of ethnography. See *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 66-80.

[31] For a list of Ammianus' geographical mistakes, see G. M. Woloch, "Ammianus, Alpine Passes and Maps," *Arctos* 27 (1993): 149-53.

re-examine a controversial subject: did the ancients use maps as we do? If they did, it might be surprising that Ammianus, a historian with extensive military experience, would have missed the occasion to include such cartographic knowledge in his geographical narrative.

Ammianus claims to have seen a geographical representation of Persia: "And as the pens of the geographers have drawn it (*geographici stili formarunt*) the whole circuit just described has this form" (23.6.13). In a letter to his friend Alypius of Antioch, Julian thanks him for a map he has received: "It happened that when you sent me your map (γεωγραφίαν) I had just recovered from my illness, but I was none the less glad on that account to receive the chart (πινάκιον) that you sent. For not only does it contain diagrams (διαγράμματα) better than any hitherto made, but you have embellished it by adding those iambic verses."[32] We now need to answer two questions: What did such maps look like? And, what was their function? The ancients distinguished between two types of geographical representation: γεωγραφία describes the whole earth, what we would call a global map. Chorography provides regional details.[33] Both terms could refer to maps or texts. Apart from the scale, the two methods also differ in layout and number of details. Ptolemy gives the most precise description: the geographical map includes gulfs, large cities, nations, and major rivers. Conversely, a chorographic map displays ports, towns, districts, river tributaries, etc. Further, chorography uses the art of painting, whereas geography is about axes, distances, and astronomical as well as mathematical calculations.[34] Ausonius vaguely implies this distinction in the *Gratiarum actio ad Gratianum imperatorem pro consulato,* when he directly refers to global maps. He

[32] Julian *Epistulae* 7.(ed. and trans. Wright). For Alypius see *PLRE 1*. 46-7.
[33] Strabo 1.1.1 (ed. and trans. Jones).
[34] Ptolemy *Geographia* 1.1 (ed. Nobbe). See Strabo. 2.5.10; 2.5.17 (ed. and trans. Jones).

wishes to enumerate the facts about the emperor's deeds and titles without following them out in detail:

"But that is another theme and one which will be treated in its own separate place, when I decide that the time has come to sketch distinctively and briefly all my facts without following them out in detail—like those who confine a map of the world (*terrarum orbem*) to the compass of a single sheet (*unius tabulae*), thereby causing it to lose something in impressiveness, but without any sacrifice of truth."[35]

Since Ammianus and Julian spoke Greek as their first language, there is no reason to believe that they were unaware of this basic distinction. They were indeed referring to maps of the inhabited world. Sundwall suggests that Ammianus may have seen a map of Persia.[36] Would it not be more precise to state that Ammianus saw the limits of Persia in a global map as the expression *geographici stili* suggests? Dilke argues that Julian may have received a map of Britain since Alypius had been or was *vicarius* of the British provinces.[37] However, is there any indication in Julian's letter why we should ignore the standard meaning of γεωγραφία as map of the world?

As I discuss in Appendix 5, it is indeed doubtful that the Romans methodically employed the existing cartographical knowledge to make two-dimensional maps. Therefore, one should not conclude that those global maps mentioned by Ammianus were necessarily cartographical representations based on a system of longitudes and latitudes. The same precaution should be observed when seeking other representations of the

[35] *Gratiarum Actio*. 2 (ed. and trans. Evelyn White).
[36] Gavin A. Sundwall, "Ammianus Geographicus," *American Journal of Philology* 117 (1996), 622, n. 17.
[37] J. B. Harley and David Woodward, eds., *The History of Cartography*, vol. 1, *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 254-55.

inhabited world as parallels to the global maps referred in the *RG*. For example, one example of a global geographical description is the so-called "Map of Agrippa" on the Porticus Vipsania at Rome, although, we must admit, there is strong evidence to believe that this display was merely an un-illustrated collection of *commentarii* on the different regions of the inhabited world.[38] Though the monument itself is not extant, scholars have attempted a reconstruction from fragments of Agrippa's *Commentarii* containing the instructions to draw a map, from citations in Pliny's *Naturalis historia*, and from passages in Strabo regarding Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, and Italy. It is likely that this global map, or the geographical descriptions to draw such a map, were truly geographical according to Strabo's and Ptolemy's conceptual distinctions. Indeed, the citations from Agrippa's *Commentarii* suggest that the original text mainly contained statistics regarding the dimensions, in longitude and latitude, of provinces, rivers, seas, gulfs, and the coast in general.

4.2. Geographical Representations in the *Res Gestae*

Nevertheless, global maps are useless for planning military campaigns, and their employment in a geographical digression is rather limited. For the purpose of our inquiry,

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[38] Kai Brodersen argues that there is no evidence for the existence of an actual map on the Porticus Vipsania. He bases much of his thesis on a close reading of ancient references to this monument. For instance, Pliny the Elder employs *spectandum* to refer to texts as well. Further, notes Brodersen, when other ancient writers describe this porticus, they never mention the existence of a "map." See Kai Brodersen, *Terra Cognita: Studien zur römischen Raumerfassung* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1995), 268-87. Conversely, Benet Salway argues that there is a long tradition that associates pictorial representation with public porticos. Further, notes Salway, two ancient authors refer to what may be later versions of the map of Agrippa: in his panegyric to restore the school at Autun, Eumenius mentions the utility of a displayed map to teach the young. And there is an epigram about the redrafting of the anonymous *Divisio orbis terrarum*; the redrafting was suggested by Theodosius II in 435 A.D. See Benet Salway, "Travel, *Itineraria* and *Tabellaria*.," in *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire,* ed. C. Adams and R. Laurence, 29 (London: Routledge, 2001). Brodersen discusses the evidence cited by Salway in *Terra Cognita,* 75; 106-7, and in "The Presentation of Geographical Knowledge for Travel and Transport in the Roman World: *Itineraria non tantum adnotata sed etiam picta,*" in *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire,* ed. C. Adams and R. Laurence, 9, no. 9. (London: Routledge, 2001).

we need to know whether Ammianus employed smaller maps for the composition of his geographical digressions. In order to answer this question, we need to determine Ammianus'method by analyzing some of his geographical descriptions. For instance, the historian depicts the eastern frontier as follows:

> But the frontier of the East, extending a long distance in a straight line (*in longum protensus et rectum*), reaches from the banks of the Euphrates to the borders of the Nile, being bounded on the left by the Saracenic races and on the right exposed to the waves of the sea (14.8.5).

Actually, the eastern frontier was not a straight line. Ammianus merely wishes to establish the Euphrates and Nile rivers as the main reference points that delimit the area he is about to describe. By saying that the sea is on his right and the Saracens on his left, the historian seems to imply an imaginary journey southwards. However, this information is not explicitly conveyed to the reader. The beginning of the description of the eastern provinces is also a typical example of Ammianus' geographical representation:

> After one passes the summits of Mount Taurus, which rise to a lofty height, Cilicia spreads out in widely extended plains, a land abounding in products of every kind; and adjoining its right side is Isauria, equally blest with fruitful vines and abundant grain, being divided in the middle by the navigable river Calycadnus (14.8.1).

Ammianus invites the reader to follow a sequence of locations. The manner the information is presented in this passage might have come from the personal experience of a traveler following a route or even from the inhabitants of the region. Further, it is also plausible that a painted itinerary would have contained drawings depicting the summits of Mount Taurus, the plains of Cilicia, and the agricultural wealth of Isauria. Overall, the

description follows a sequence of places as they would be described in a road itinerary. It is very unlikely that this account alone would have informed the ancient reader that the orientation was south-southeast, unless he himself knew that particular region or had the opportunity to consult an itinerary. In the description of Thrace, the historian follows a similar approach:

> Athos, that lofty mountain in Macedonia through which the Medic ships once passed, and Caphereus, the headland of Euboea where Nauplius, father of Palamedes, wrecked the Argive fleet, although they face each other at a long distance apart, separate the Aegean and the Thessalian seas. The Aegean gradually grows larger, and on the right, where it is of wide extent, is rich in islands, the Sporades and the Cyclades, so-called because they are all grouped about Delos, famous as the cradle of the gods. On the left, it washes Imbros and Tenedos, Lemnos and Thasos, and when the wind is strong, dashes violently upon Lesbos (22.8.2).

There is not a single mention to the directional system based on the four points of the compass. First, the historian establishes a reference point that would be surely known to the general reader: Mount Athos. From there, Ammianus draws a north-south straight imaginary line connecting Mount Athos with Caphereus in southern Euboea. By doing this Ammianus creates a clear division between the Thessalian and the Aegean seas. The remaining description can only be understood if the reader places himself in the second reference point that has been mentioned: Caphereus. From this location, Ammianus mentions some islands located on his right: the Sporades and Cyclades. On his left are Imbros, Tenedos, Lemnos, Thasos and Lesbos. It is clear then that Ammianus' understanding of geography greatly differs from our own. If he indeed implies a West-East division by referring to Mount Athos and Caphereus, this distinction is actually a deduction of the modern reader applying conventional cartography. It is not, however,

Ammianus' original intention. Similarly, that right and left are actually northern and southern Aegean respectively is again our own deduction. Ammianus describes geography as if he invited the reader to a journey from one location to another. Thus, if the reader were at Caphereus, Ammianus tells him what he would find on his left and right. Consequently, Ammianus' method largely matches the way road itineraries were made: they were mainly the result of an oral tradition that has been shaped by the experience of previous travelers and explorers.

Consequently, the geographical descriptions discussed above do not reflect information from two-dimensional maps. It could be argued that historians such as Ammianus presented the geographical information in this particular form because they knew it would be difficult to incorporate actual maps in all the papyrus rolls so that the reader could easily follow geographic descriptions. In other words, it is likely that most readers did not have ready access to convenient maps, so Ammianus created a type of description based on the itinerary. In this case, the reader would have felt familiar with a narrative that seemed to be derived from oral sources. Nevertheless, we must also wonder whether two-dimensional maps of medium size were actually employed in the army. If Ammianus used this type of map throughout his years in the army, do we have to assume that he refrained from displaying his cartographic knowledge in order not to confuse the reader? To answer this question we must analyze the evidence regarding the existence of medium-scale maps of two dimensions. This is the sort of cartography that is considered useful for planning military campaigns.

4.3. The Role of Two-Dimensional Maps and Itineraries in the *Res Gestae*

It is clear that Ammianus' geographical descriptions largely evoke the way a road itinerary such as the Peutinger Table was depicted. Ammianus often presents a quasi-linear succession of towns, fortifications, and points of reference, such as mountains and rivers. As Sundwall has thoroughly explained, Ammianus' geographical method begins from a point of reference that is then connected to other points. Scant attention is paid to the standard directional knowledge based on the four points of the compass.[39] The historian uses it only occasionally, for example to place one location in relation to another, or to direct the reader to the location on a regional or global map. However, it seems clear that Ammianus is mainly concerned with taking the reader from one location to the next, outlining a linear organization of space. This organization derives from a mental map rather than from the conventional two-dimensional cartography. Furthermore, a linear conception of space contributed to the inability of Romans to describe accurately the geography of what they labeled as uncivilized regions. As Lee explains, the presence of cities and roads in a region greatly facilitated the possibility to visualize a particular region: cities were synonymous with civilized life, and the presence of roads guaranteed the topographical knowledge of the area.[40]

To provide a good final example of the historian's treatment of geography, here is his description of Thrace:

> But, as we now see them, those same places, formed in the shape of a crescent moon, present the appearance of a beautiful theatre. At its western summit are the steep mountains through which the narrow pass of Succi opens, separating Thrace from Dacia. The left side, towards the northern stars, is shut in by the lofty heights of Mount Haemus and the Hister, which, where it washes Roman soil, borders on many cities, fortresses, and castles. On the right, which is the south side,

[39] Sundwall, "Ammianus Geographicus," 631-39.
[40] Lee, *Information and Frontiers*, 89.

extend the cliffs of Rhodope, and where the morning star rises it is bounded by the strait which flows with an abundance of water from the Euxine Sea, and going on to mingle its waters with the Aegaean, opens a narrow cleft between the lands. But on the eastern corner the land is connected with the frontiers of Macedonia by a steep and narrow pass, which is called Acontisma. Next to this is the posting station of Arethusa, in which is to be seen the tomb of Euripides, noted for his lofty tragedies, and Stagira, known as the birthplace of Aristotle, who, as Cicero says, poured forth a golden stream (27.4.5-8).

Indeed, Ammianus opens the description with a visualization of an actual map.[41] The clause "as we now see" (*ut nunc cernimus*) seems to refer to Thrace's shape and natural frontiers as they would be drawn in a regional or global map: Thrace has the shape of a crescent moon, more specifically, of a theatre, and its mountainous western corner borders with the province of Dacia. Perhaps he is alluding to a regional map: the image of the theatre was probably reinforced by painted mountain chains and rivers that would somehow resemble the seats (*cunei*) of the theatre. However, the modern reader would soon feel disappointed with the following lines as Ammianus does not strictly refer to locations according to the four points of the compass. Conversely, the historian describes an itinerary-like sequence, placing himself in the imagined stage of the theatre and describing the main geographical features of the province as he advances eastwards. What might confuse the modern reader is Ammianus' occasional reference to the more conventional four-point directional system. Although these references seem to invite the reader to consult a map, they are never the primary source of orientation. Whereas the Mount Haemus and the river Hister (Danube) are on his left (*partem vero sinistram*), the historian also states that they are located to the North (*arctois obnoxiam stellis*).

[41] The *Notitia Dignitatum* could be a good example of the type of cartographic illustration the historian had in mind. This document contained representations of islands, such as Britain, and different regions of the empire. However, these illustrations were not drawn by following strict geographical principles. See G. D. B. Jones and D. Mattingly, *An Atlas of Roman Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 33.

Similarly, the cliffs of Rhodope receive two geographical specifications: they are on the right (*per dextrum*) and to the South (*quod australe est*). While the river connecting the Euxine Sea with the Aegean is located to the East (*unde eoum iubar exsurgit*) according to a conventional map, Ammianus inexplicably situates the narrow pass of Acontisma, which connects Thracia with Macedonia, on the eastern corner (*ex angulo orientali*). This last observation clearly reveals that the geographical description follows the point of view of the traveler whose personal experience reflects the design of a road itinerary.

To summarize: the geographical representations in the *RG* confirm the idea that the Romans had a linear conception of space, clearly manifested in the use of road itineraries. Although Ammianus occasionally refers to global geographies and even to pictorial description of regions, we should not assume that they are maps following strict cartographical standards.

5. THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC RECEPTION OF THE GEOGRAPHIC DIGRESSIONS

In section 3, I presented some examples showing that Ammianus was not interested in revealing new information about other nations and peoples, some of them living on the margins of the Empire. The historian relies almost exclusively on previous accounts as well as commonplaces that ultimately emphasize Roman cultural superiority. This approach perfectly matches the conventions of these cultural digressions, and there is no reason to think that the Roman educated public of the fourth century would have expected a more contemporary and accurate account. Concerning the geographic digressions, Ammianus was not going against the historiographical tradition. In general,

ancient geographical descriptions are even more vague, and sometimes the product of poetic idealizations.[42]

What I now propose is to examine whether the Graeco-Roman curriculum may have played a role in the fact that the geographic digressions did not include a more scientific treatment of cartography. This examination will help us answer the following question: Why did Roman commanders rely on oral information and road itineraries to plan their military expeditions and campaigns? After several centuries of world domination, one would expect that the imperial government would have created a department engaged in map-making to improve geographical accuracy. Why did the Romans not apply the Hellenistic knowledge that they often used in drawing global maps? I intend to address these questions by examining the role of geography in education. Such analysis will also offer us a fair assessment of the reception of Ammianus' geographical digressions. Did geography actually become a regular scientific subject within the traditional curriculum? Were two-dimensional maps regularly used at schools? The answer to these questions will provide us with valuable information to understand the intellectual background behind the geographical descriptions of the *RG*.

5.1. The Role of Maps, Geographical Treatises, and Ptolemy in Education.

[42] See Horsfall, "Illusion and Reality in Latin Topographical Writing," 196-208.

Maps were occasionally displayed on walls and mentioned in poetry.[43] There is also some evidence showing that maps could be useful teaching aids. In quoting Theophrastus' will, Diogenes Laertius alludes to maps displayed in a *porticus* of the *Lyceum* in Athens: "Next, to rebuild the small cloister adjoining the Museum at least as handsomely as before, and to replace in the lower cloister the tablets (πίνακας) containing the countries traversed by explorers."[44] In the panegyric requesting the restoration of the schools of rhetoric at Autun, Eumenius, a fourth-century author, refers to a large map set on a balcony wall. It is a matter of controversy, however, whether Eumenius is referring to an existing school map that needed restoring, or to a map that the author is proposing be set up for display:

Further, in its porticos let the young men see and contemplate daily every land and all the seas and whatever cities, peoples, nations the unconquered rulers either restore by affection or conquer by valor or restrain by fear. Since for the purpose of instructing the youth, to have them learn more clearly with their eyes what they comprehend less readily by their ears, there are pictured in that place, as I believe you have seen yourself, the sites of all locations with their names, their extent, and the distances between them, the sources and terminations of all the rivers, the curves of all the shores, and the Ocean, both where its circuit girds the earth and where its pressure breaks into it.[45]

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[43] According to Livy, in 174 B. C. T. Sempronius Gracchus placed a map of Sardinia in the temple of Mater Mantua as a commemoration of his victories: *Sardinia insulae forma erat, atque in ea simulacra pugnarum picta.* The location where the map was displayed, as well as the painting of the battle scenes, allude to its religious and ideological function. See Livy *De urbe condita* 41.28.10 (ed. and trans. Foster). In his *De re rustica,* Varro presents the speakers looking at an "Italy painted" (*Italiam pictam*) on a wall of the Sanctuary of Tellus. The philosopher in the group refers to Eratosthenes' partition of the world into South and North. The speakers compare Italy with Asia Minor, a region that has similar latitudes. Then, the speakers discuss in detail parts of Italy. Varro *De re rustica* 1.2.1 (ed. and trans. Hooper). For allusions to maps in poetry, see Ovid *Heroides* 1.5 (ed. and trans. Showerman) Propertius 4.3.33-40 (ed. and trans. Goold). As I have explained elsewhere in this chapter and in Appendix 5, the word "map" does not necessarily signify a two-dimensional map based on a system of latitudes and longitudes. Even if some of the maps mentioned above were cartographical in a modern sense, it is unlikely that they were used for military campaigns or exploration. See Appendix 5.

[44] Diogenes Laertius 5.51 (ed. and trans. Hicks).

[45] Eumenius 4. 20 (trans. Rodgers).

A student's note added to Julius Honorius' *Cosmographia*, a work not written before the fourth century, refers to the use of the terrestrial globe as a teaching aid.[46] The use of maps at schools seems to have continued after the fall of Rome. In the sixth century, Cassiodorus recommends the work of Honorius to his pupils, advising also the use of the *pinax* (map) as a useful pedagogical tool to accompany the reading of the geographical poem of Dionysius of Alexandria.[47]

We must also examine the evidence of geographical summaries that might have been used as textbooks. It seems that some geographical treatises that were written in the first century B.C. were not concerned with challenging previous theories but with the function of education. The writing of these works, whose main goal was to transmit and spread the Hellenistic knowledge of geography, needs to be considered in a wider process of Hellenization of Roman culture as the empire was extending through the Mediterranean. The work of Theodosius of Bithynia (ca. 150 B.C.-70 B.C.) illustrates the nature of these treatises. His two manuals, *Spherics* and *Inhabitable Places*, are fundamentally geometrical: the first one deals with the celestial sphere and its division in circles. The second one deals with the earth at the center of this celestial sphere. Posidonius was a more influential figure. A native of Syria and contemporary of Theodosius, Posidonius traveled extensively in the western Mediterranean, finally establishing a school in Rhodes. We know that some relevant visitors patronized the school: the general Pompey and Cicero. The latter has transmitted much of what we

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[46] *Excerpta eius sphaerae vel continentia*. 50. See *Iulii Honorii Cosmographia* in *Geographi Latini minores*. ed. A. Riese. Heilbronn. 1878; reprinted Hildesheim. 1964. 24-55. For information about Julius Honorius, see *PLRE* 2. 569.

[47] Cassiodorus *Institutiones* 1.25.1- 2 (ed. Mynors).

know about Posidonius. For instance, Cicero describes the planetarium destined to teach students the laws of the universe:

> Our friend Posidonius as you know has recently made a globe that in its revolution shows the movements of the sun and stars and planets, by day and night, just as they appear in the sky. Now if someone were to take this globe and show it to the people of Britain or Scythia would a single one of those barbarians fail to see that it was the product of a conscious intelligence? [48]

Also written in the first century B.C. is Geminus' *Introduction to Phaenomena*, a treatise that deals with both astronomy and mathematical geography. Geminus specifies how the celestial spheres employed in teaching should be built: according to the latitude of Rhodes, 36 degrees North, so that the polar axis makes an angle of 36 degrees with the plane of the horizon.[49] A terrestrial globe, argues Geminus, should be constructed according to the same parameters.[50] More interestingly, Geminus refers to the existence of two-dimensional maps. He notes that oblong maps were more trustworthy, remarking that, as the length of the inhabited world was twice its width, a circular map would distort distances.[51]

To the treatises mentioned above, we must add Ptolemy's *Geography*, a work that summarized previous scholarship and provided important innovations of its own. It seems very likely that Ptolemy drew the maps he describes in his *Geography*.[52] Although he

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[48] Cicero *De Natura Deorum* 2.88 (trans. McGregor)
[49] Geminus *Elementa astronomiae* 5.489 (ed. and trans. Aujac)
[50] Ibid., 16.12.
[51] Ibid. 16.4-5.
[52] Some scholars, however, have denied that Ptolemy drew maps. For a bibliographical summary of this scholarly discussion see O. A. W. Dilke, *Greek and Roman Maps*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985),207, n. 28.

constantly uses the future tense, "we shall draw", in the first two books, he clearly states having drawn maps in book 8:

> Starting from such a basis for the division, we have made ten maps of Europe, four maps of Libya, and twelve maps of the whole Asia. We have set out the captions for each, putting first the continent to which the map belongs, its ordinal number, what countries contains, approximately what ratio the parallel through its middle has to the meridian, and what the boundary of the whole map is.[53]

Moreover, Marinus' world map could not have been a reliable source. Ptolemy himself argues that drawing a map is the way to eliminate errors such as those he found in Marinus' writings.[54] This does not mean, however, that Ptolemy included actual maps in the manuscript of his edition of the *Geography*. There are some important physical constrictions. For instance, if a world map could be easily displayed on the wall of a portico, rolls of papyrus posed serious limitations. According to the list of coordinates in the *Geography*, the map of Ptolemy could not have been smaller than one meter in height and two in width. In the second century A.D., books such as the *Geography* were written on rolls of papyrus that were normally 30 centimeters in height.[55] A recent discovery has confirmed the theory about the restrictions of the manuscript tradition. We refer to a fragment of a papyrus roll from the middle of the first century B.C. that contains a Greek geographical treatise with a map. The text is the description of Spain from the *Geography* of Artemidorus, a work that Strabo knew. The height of the roll was 32.5 centimeters, and the width was over 93.5 centimeters, creating a distortion similar to that of the

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[53] Ptolemy *Geographia*. 8.2.1 (trans. Berggren and Jones).
[54] Ibid., 1.17.
[55] See J. L. Berggren and Alexander Jones, *Ptolemy's Geography: An Annotated Translation of the Theoretical Chapters* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 47.

Peutinger Table, where East-West distances are represented to a much larger scale than North-South distances.[56] It is therefore certain that in the history of the transmission of Ptolemy's text, there was a stage in which the manuscripts were too small to contain the maps. No scholar has analyzed this particular fact within the context of education in antiquity. Contrary to Dilke's view, which assumes that Ptolemy incorporated maps in his edition and that these maps were fairly well-known,[57] we must argue that in reality maps based on Ptolemy's work were not so popular. If the Ptolemaic maps were not available to be copied, a cartographical reproduction based on Ptolemy's instructions would have required a comprehensive knowledge of basic geographical concepts: the terrestrial and celestial spheres, the horizon, parallels and latitude, meridians and longitude, the ecliptic, climatic zones, degrees, units of distance, and directions. The question is: was the regular Graeco-Roman curriculum able to provide the necessary background so that maps based on Ptolemy's instructions could be commonly drawn? How about the astronomical treatises I have mentioned above? Were they an essential part of the school curriculum? Were they only used by a handful of experts in astronomy?

5.2. The Role of Geographical Education in the *Res Gestae*.

The content of ancient education was extremely pragmatic. While its almost exclusively literary character would be considered bizarre today, it certainly fulfilled the career expectations of the ancients. An education based on linguistic studies and oratory provided the elite with the necessary rhetorical training to succeed in a career in politics or in the courtroom. Similarly, knowledge of Graeco-Roman literature became an

[56] C. Gallazi and B. Kramer, "Artemidor im Zeichensaal: Eine Papyrusrolle mit Text, Landkarte und Skizzenbüchern aus späthellenistischer Zeit," *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 44 (1998): 189-208.
[57] Dilke, *Greek and Roman Maps*, 80 ff.

important element for social prestige. As I will show in the following chapter, scientific education was a Hellenistic ideal. In reality, it played an irrelevant role in the traditional curriculum. It is very unlikely that the Roman educated classes were ever engaged in the study of advanced mathematics and astronomy, the necessary subjects for the study of geography, unless they pursued specialized studies in astronomy and philosophy after their rhetorical education. Only under these circumstances, the treatises described above, including the works of Ptolemy, would have played a significant role. Cicero, for instance, perfectly exemplifies the actual status of a geographical education within the traditional curriculum. When Atticus criticizes Cicero for having written that most of the city-states of the Peloponnese were located on the coast, Cicero answers that he had read the *tabulae* of Dicaearchus, probably referring to the lost περίοδος γῆς. However, Cicero lacked a scientific knowledge of geography. He attempted to compose a treatise on geography and asked Atticus for advice. The latter sent him a work of mathematical geography by Serapion The project never materialized, and Cicero commented: "I am very much obliged to you for sending me Serapion's book, of which, between ourselves, I hardly understand one line in a thousand."[58] If a writer such as Cicero, who incarnated the idea of the Hellenized Roman intellectual, ignored the mathematical background of geography, it is not surprising to find no evidence for the teaching of geography as a separate subject in the Graeco-Roman curriculum. Similarly, Ammianus might have had a superficial knowledge of geography. Theoretically, maps based on Ptolemy's *Geography* could have been available to Ammianus. We know that in the fourth century Pappus of Alexandria employed maps based on Ptolemy's *Geography* in order to write his treatise on geography. We do not know, however, how accurate those maps were,

[58] Cicero *Ad Atticum* 2.4.1 (ed. and trans. Shackleton Bailey).

since the first extant Ptolemaic map was composed by Maximus Planudes around 1300.[59] Ammianus indeed read Ptolemy, but the text of the *RG* reveals that the historian never made any consistent scientific use of Ptolemy's maps. Ptolemy merely provided basic data. For example, aside from some minor changes, Ammianus closely follows Ptolemy's Book 6 in the order in which the Persian provinces are mentioned (23.6.14).

Furthermore, there was no practical reason why future officers and generals of the empire would have been trained in map making. As I have shown above, the ancients organized space according to mental maps that were the result of personal observation and information derived from oral sources and itineraries. It is remarkable that the formal articulation of these mental maps resembles the manner ancient epic and other canonical literary works learnt at school had dealt with topography. If any geography was ever taught, this knowledge invariably came from literature.

A general geographical explanation was introduced in the commentaries of literary works.[60] For instance, we may speculate about what sorts of commentaries a grammarian might have produced on the geographical information contained in the Catalogue of Ships in the Iliad, which enumerates the Greek ships at Aulis before sailing for Troy, and contains nearly two hundred place names. Probably, we would have witnessed a tension between what the ancients clearly viewed as legendary and the role played by Homer as the educator of Greece, a fact recognized even by Plato, who had excluded all poetry from his ideal republic.[61] Some authors utterly relied on Homer. Strabo, who wrote under Augustus and Tiberius, devoted the first book of his *Geography*

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[59] Berggren and Jones, *Ptolemy's Geography*, 49

[60] For the auxiliary function of geography in the study of literature, see Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1004; W. Wolska-Conus, "Geographie," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 10, no. 73-4 (1978): 205.

[61] Plato *Respublica*, 606e-607a (ed. and trans. Shorey).

to refute Eratosthenes, who stated that Homer had no interest in scientific accuracy. In his description of Greece, Strabo closely follows Homer, mentioning practically all the cities of the Catalogue.[62] Though Strabo's attitude towards Homer was unique, it seems that, overall, the ancients admitted that the poems contained a certain degree of geographical and historical accuracy, as Polybius recognizes.[63] Concerning writers of the fourth century, the testimony of Libanius suggests that Homer was still among the canonical authors of the eastern curriculum.[64] Ammianus cites or quotes Homer 12 times. Mostly, the references to the poems function as erudite literary echoes illustrating a particular statement or scene. On four occasions, however, the historian seems to take the poet as a serious piece of evidence. In the short excursus on the causes and types of plagues, a digression following the brief description of the plague in Amida, Ammianus refers to Homer's account of the pestilence assailing the Greeks as a mythical story that contains a scientific explanation: the darts of Apollo signify the heat of the sun causing the plague (19.4.3).[65] Further, argues Ammianus, by depicting mules and dogs dying first, Homer presents an accurate illustration of what happens when grosser exhalations from the earth make the air heavier, killing first the creatures which constantly look downward (19.4.6).[66] In the theological sphere, Ammianus states that the existence of guardian spirits is evidenced in the Homeric poems: it was not the gods who intervened in human affairs but guardian spirits (21.14.5). A similar intellectual approach is observed as the historian considers Homer a valuable source for geographical information. Ammianus

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[62] Paul W. Wallace, *Strabo's Description of Boiotia: A Commentary* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1979), 2.
[63] Polybius 3. 2. 1-4, 8 (ed. and trans. Paton).
[64] Libanius *Epistulae* 181 (ed. and trans. Norman). Cf. *Dio Chrysostomus Orationes* 18.8 ff (ed. and trans. Cohoon and Crosby). Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 10. 1.68 ff (ed. and trans. Russell).
[65] Homer *Iliad* 1.9 ff, 43 ff (ed. and trans. Murray).
[66] Ibid.,1.49-50.

argues that Homer teaches (*docet*) that Thrace was formerly a large extension of plains and lofty mountains since the poet imagines (*Homeri perennis auctoritas...fingentis*) that the North and West winds begin to blow from there (27.4.3).[67] Lastly, Ammianus refers to the authority of both Homer and Cicero to locate the mountain Mimas in the Ionian city of Erythrae (31.14.8).[68] Aside from these clear examples of Homer's wisdom being rationalized and interpreted, it may be argued that the language of the poet often shapes the general geographical description of regions and provinces in the *RG*. Ammianus always employs the same pattern: an enumeration of the great cities that ennoble the region. The mention of a city is often accompanied by a brief reference to its ancient founders and historical distinction, a convention with a long literary tradition that takes us back to the Iliad's Catalogue of Ships. For instance, in the digression on the eastern provinces, the historian depicts the province of Cilicia as follows:

> After one passes the summits of Mount Taurus, which rise to a lofty height, Cilicia spreads out in widely extended plains, a land abounding in products of every kind (14.8.1)...Cilicia, however, which boasts of the river Cydnus, is ennobled by Tarsus, a fair city; this is said to have been founded by Perseus, son of Jupiter and Danae, or else by a wealthy and high-born man, Sandam by name, who came from Ethiopia. There is also Anazarbus, bearing the name of its founder, and Mobsuestia, the abode of that famous diviner Mobsus. He, wandering from his fellow-warriors when they were returning after having carried off the Golden Fleece, and being borne to the coast of Africa, met a sudden death (14.8.3).

This is the type of geographical description aimed to entertain an audience rather than give accurate locations. That the Latin reader may have understood Homeric

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[67] Homer *Iliad* 9.5 (ed. and trans. Murray).
[68] Homer *Odyssey*. 3.172 (ed. and trans. Murray). Cicero *Ad Atticum* 16.13a.2 (ed. and trans. Shackleton Bailey).

geographical references and echoes is certainly possible. Although the Roman educated reader of the fourth century had an imperfect knowledge of Greek, he was capable of quoting from summaries and Latin translations. Indeed, Homer was still considered the supreme classical poet that an educated person should occasionally cite.[69]

The Latin reader might have also acquired a general knowledge of geography through the study of the poem called Περιήγεσις τῆς οἰκουμένης by Dionysius of Alexandria, a contemporary of Ptolemy. The poem is written in hexametric verse echoing the language of Homer and Hesiod. If Aratus had effectively popularized astronomical knowledge in his *Phaenomena*, Dionysius was equally successful in summarizing traditional geographical knowledge since Eratosthenes. There are some reasons to believe that this poem became a school-text in Late Antiquity. The orator Themistius knew the work,[70] and the first Latin translation of this work was accomplished in the fourth century by Rufius Festus Avienus (*Descriptio Orbis Terrarum*), who had previously translated Aratus' *Phaenomena*. In the sixth century the poem was translated by Priscian the grammarian, and Stephanos of Byzantion often quotes it in his *Ethnika*, an encyclopedic work of geographical names. The Περιήγεσις is also quoted in the Byzantine encyclopedia *Etymologicum Genuinum*. Moreover, the existence of more than 130 manuscripts confirms the popularity of the poem in the Middle Ages.

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[69] Although Symmachus often quotes Homer, his knowledge of the Greek poet comes from Latin translations and summaries, as Kroll has shown. See Wilhem Kroll, *De Q. Aurelii Symmachi studiis Graecis et Latinis* (Breslau: G. Koebner, 1891), 12-4. Augustine's difficulties with the Greek language and literature have been extensively described by Marrou in *Saint Augustin*, 28-46. In a passage of his *Confessions* Augustine recalls the teaching of Homer: "But when then did I hate the Greek literature that chants of such things? For Homer himself was skilful in contriving such fictions, and is most delightfully wanton; but yet very harsh to me being a schoolboy. I believe that Vergil is no less to Grecian children when they be compelled to learn him, as I was to learn Homer." Augustine *Confessions* 1.14 (ed. and trans. Watts). After an exhaustive examination of Augustine's quotations from Homer, Courcelle concludes: "Of the Homeric poems, therefore, he has neither any direct knowledge nor a general comprehension, and probably read in his youth only rare excerpts." See *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*, 165-66.

[70] Themistius *Orationes* 30.183 ff (ed. Schenkl, Downey, and Norman).

As Gardthausen and Gualandri have demonstrated, Ammianus' digression on the region of the Pontic Sea, which reflects the structure of a *periplus*, is largely based on Dionysius' Περιήγεσις.[71] The historian introduces the excursus by promising that his account of the geography of the Black Sea will be based on personal information and readings: *visa et lecta* (22.8.1). There is no sign, however, that Ammianus incorporated data from personal experience or that his account strongly relied on serious reading of scientific geography. Ammianus certainly refers to the authority of Eratosthenes, Hecataeus and Ptolemy for the length of the circumference of the Pontus Sea: "The complete voyage around its shores, as one would encircle an island, is a distance of 23,000 *stadia* as is asserted by Eratosthenes, Hecataeus, Ptolemy and other very accurate investigators of such problems" (22.8.10). However, there is no evidence that Hecataeus and Ptolemy provided such information in their works. Eratosthenes actually gave the figure of 20,000 *stadia*.[72]

Following the example of previous descriptions of the area, Ammianus repeatedly compares the shape of the Pontus Sea with a Scythian bow (22.8.10; 13; 20; 37; 42; 43).[73] The comparisons, nevertheless, are often contradictory, clearly revealing that the historian never checked a map of the region as he was composing the excursus.[74] For instance, Ammianus locates the Sea of Azov (*Palus Maeotis*) on the eastern side of the Black Sea instead of to the North: "and where the sun rises from the eastern ocean it comes to an end in the marshes of the Maeotis" (22.8.11). How did this error happen?

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[71] Gardthausen, "Die geographischen Quellen Ammians," 539; Gualandri, "Fonti geografiche di Ammiano Marcellino," 200 ff. See *Dionysius Periegetes* 652-821 (ed. Bernhardy).
[72] Fr. 3B 39. See E. H. Berger, ed., *Die geographischen Fragmente des Eratosthenes* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1880), 270.
[73] Many ancient descriptions of the Pontus Euxinus contain this comparison. Sallust *Historiae* 3.63 (ed. and trans.); Strabo 2.5.22 (ed. and trans. Jones); Pliny *Naturalis historia* 4.76 (ed. and trans. Rackham); Pomponius Mela 1.102 (ed. and trans. Silberman).
[74] Gualandri, "Fonti geografiche di Ammiano Marcellino," 199-211.

First, we must emphasize the overall literary character of the digression, a fact even acknowledged by the historian himself: *ut poetae locuntur* (22.8.13). More specifically, Dionysius' poem provides the answer. There are striking similarities between Ammianus' excursus and Dionysius' poem. Peoples and rivers mentioned by Dionysius also appear in Ammianus' digression. Both passages reflect the Homeric habit of alternating topographical descriptions with Greek history and mythology. Lastly, Ammianus' mistake in placing the *Palus Maeotis*, an error not found in other geographers, is only explicable by Dionysius' unclear comparison of the Pontus Sea with the Scythian bow.[75]

The manuscript tradition reveals that at a certain point maps were added to the edition of Dionysius' poem: several annotations in the margins of the extant manuscripts refer to maps accompanying the poem. Some of the notes remark that such and such place is lacking on the map or that there are discrepancies in the outlines of a particular region. Dilke suggests that these maps were probably drawn on the models of Eratosthenes' and Strabo's maps.[76] However, were those maps added in the fourth century? The earliest evidence we possess is the sixth century author Cassiodorus, who, as I previously pointed out, advises his pupils to employ maps along with the poem. Nevertheless, even if we assume that Ammianus employed an edition of the poem with maps attached to it, there is no evidence that the historian ever made any objective use of that cartography. Any reference in the *RG* to the shape of a particular province or region merely seems to reflect that maps were to a certain extent a familiar feature in Graeco-Roman society. Those references, however, do not prove that Ammianus had a comprehensive knowledge of cartography—some of them are probably derived from

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[75] Dionysius Periegetes 157-63 (ed. Bernhardy). Gualandri, "Fonti geografiche di Ammiano Marcellino," 204-8.
[76] Harley and Woodward, *History of Cartography*, vol. 1, 172.

geographic narratives—or that Ammianus actively employed maps that were never used in military campaigns.

CONCLUSION

Matthews notes that Ammianus' extensive use of cultural digressions places the historian within the Greek intellectual tradition. I have challenged Matthews' view by arguing that we must reconsider the role of a "Greek intellectual" within the cultural context of the fourth century. As bilingual education was in clear decline in the West, knowledge of Greek was limited to a very small elite. The fact that Ammianus prefers Latin sources for the composition of his history, including the cultural digressions, reveals a desire to meet the cultural expectations of the Roman literary public, rather than pride for the Greek intellectual tradition. Besides, I have argued that Ammianus' extensive use of digressions can be better explained by a widespread taste for encyclopedic lore. This type of knowledge had been traditionally incorporated into different literary genres. I have noted that this taste for digressional literature is reflected in contemporary works written in Latin: Servius' *Commentaries*, Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, and, particularly, the *Expositio Totius Mundi*.

In the composition of the ethnographical and geographical digressions, Ammianus incorporated information derived from personal experience and readings (*visa et lecta*). I have included several examples where the historian presents the reader with first-hand testimony. Additionally, when we carefully analyze both the content and form of the ethnographic digressions, we soon detect a more pervasive influence of literary sources.

These written sources provided Ammianus not only with a rhetorical framework but also with cultural stereotypes based on previous historical accounts. By a rhetorical framework, I here refer to the stylistic devices contained in manuals of rhetoric. I have indicated how rhetorical rules, which can be found in manuals like the treatise of Menander, largely dictate the manner Ammianus describes cities. Concerning ideological stereotypes, I have mainly focused on Ammianus' digression on the Gauls and Huns. Ammianus' narrative on these nations reveals that the historian consciously neglected information about how these people actually lived in the fourth century, relying, instead, on literary sources that emphasize, and exaggerate, the barbaric and exotic features of these people. It is clear that Ammianus is mainly concerned to convey an ideology of cultural exclusion. This approach clearly distorts the representation of historical reality.

The fact that Ammianus was a soldier who visited most of the places he described in the *RG* has considerably improved the quality of previous digressions on geography. Considering Ammianus' long career in the army, I have raised the question of whether Ammianus employed maps in order to compose his geographical digressions. In the *RG*, there is one single explicit mention of Ammianus having seen a map. An analysis of the use of the term γεωγραφία in ancient treatises on geography reveals that Ammianus is actually referring to a global map. I have also suggested that the Roman army did not use global maps. Indeed, this type of cartography is actually useless for planning military campaigns.

In my search for evidence that could show Ammianus' use of two-dimensional maps of medium-scale size—this is the type of cartography useful for exploratory and military purposes—I have carefully examined passages in the *RG* containing a detailed

geographical description. The result of my analysis reveals that these descriptions are the reflection of road-itineraries. Polybius and Vegetius are our best sources regarding the characteristics and functions of these road-itineraries. They were employed by the army, and represented a linear conception of space derived from autopsy and oral sources. Such maps mainly focus on emphasizing key locations in order to travel from one place to another. I have also argued that the Peutinger Table is an excellent piece of material evidence that visually echoes Ammianus approach to geography. Further, I have indicated that Ammianus' representation of geography clearly reinforces recent studies that argue that the Romans had a linear conception of space, and that they did not use two-dimensional maps of medium-scale size to plan their military campaigns. When Ammianus occasionally inserts visual aids that may remind us of a map, the historian is merely acknowledging that maps played a role in Roman culture.

Furthermore, I have examined the role of education in the public reception of the digressions of the *RG*. This particular topic has never received attention from scholars. Knowledge about other people and nations came from those authors regularly read at schools. By borrowing from previous historical accounts, instead of using first-hand evidence, Ammianus is meeting the cultural expectations of the literary public.

Lastly, I have attempted to examine Ammianus' representation of geography within the context of geographical lore in Antiquity. Since Ammianus is plainly neglecting a two-dimensional representation of geography, I have made the following inquiry: how would the literary public of the fourth century have received this type of geographical representation? To answer this question, I have examined the role of geography in the traditional curriculum. I have mentioned that geography, as a subject

based on mathematics, was not part of the traditional curriculum. Conversely, I have indicated that, although a scientific geographical lore was theoretically available, its use was limited to a small group of specialists. There were also some practical considerations that made the use of two-dimensional maps difficult. According to the measures established by Ptolemy, the maps could not fit the format of the papyrus roll where the text was included.

Nevertheless, geography had a particular role within the traditional curriculum. I have noted that this role was intrinsically linked to the study of literature. This approach is clearly reflected in the *RG*. Ammianus sometimes follows Homer as a geographical source. The historian also echoes the manner the poet describes cities by inserting myth and legend. More specifically, I have showed that Ammianus followed Dionysius' Περιήγεσις in the digression on the Pontus Sea. Dionysius' poem played a relevant role in the curriculum, being extremely popular in Late Antiquity. Again, Ammianus chose a literary source for his digression, instead of using information from first-hand sources.

4

THE SOURCES OF THE SCIENTIFIC DIGRESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

Following a well-known rhetorical convention in ancient historiography, Ammianus inserted the description of an eclipse of the sun. Subsequently, the historian added a long digression on astronomical matters. In this chapter, I will show that the description of the eclipse of the sun is primarily a literary showpiece, and that in the account of both the eclipse and other astronomical phenomena, the historian disregards the role of scientific observation as well as the content of treatises on astronomy. I will also show how the historian mainly relies on Latin literary sources.

As I did in the previous chapter, I will also emphasize here the role of education in the public reception of the cultural digressions, a topic that has received little attention from scholars. I will argue that the fact that the historian makes serious scientific mistakes needs to be examined within the broader context of how scientific education was incorporated in the ancient curriculum. I will emphasize the relevance of both the educational background and the practice of astronomy in the fourth century in order to explain the cultural expectations of the Roman literary public. I will show that Ammianus' ignorance of scientific matters was shared by his contemporaries.

1. THE ROLE OF OBSERVATION AND RHETORIC

20.3 opens with a detailed description of an eclipse of the sun affecting the eastern regions:

> At that same time, throughout the regions of the East the heaven was seen to be overcast with dark mist, through which the stars were visible continually from the first break of the day until noon. It was an additional cause of terror when the light of heaven was hidden and its orb removed utterly from the sight of the world, that the timorous minds of men thought that the darkening of the sun lasted too long; but it thinned out at first into the form of the crescent moon, then growing to the shape of the half-moon, and was finally fully restored (20.3.1).

Subsequently, Ammianus digresses on various astronomical matters. He first deals with solar and lunar eclipses (2-8). This excursus is interrupted by a brief explanation of the phenomenon called *sol geminus* or "two suns", which is technically known as παρήλιον (6). The insertion of this meteorological note is consistent with the content of other astronomical treatises that also cover this topic in connection with the eclipses.[1] 9-11 is a discussion of the phases of the moon, and 12, which is not related to the main subject of the chapter, deals with the faulty conclusions of the observer on earth about the stars. The section ends with some general remarks about the nature of the earth.

The time expression introducing the excursus, *eodem tempore*, refers to the year 360; in 20.1.1 the historian had referred to the tenth and third consulates of Constantius and Julian respectively. Ursicinus had been dismissed following the fall of Amida in 359,

[1] In the second book of Pliny's *Naturalis historia* the section on astronomy (1-101) is followed by a digression on meteorology (102-53), which ends with a discussion of halo forming and παρήλιον (ed. and trans. Rackham). Seneca discusses the παρήλιον in *Naturales quaestiones* 1.11 and 13; 1.12 is an explanation of the solar eclipse (ed. and trans. Corcoran). See Boeft, Hengst, and Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XX*, 37.

and Ammianus returned to Antioch. There were two solar eclipses in 360. One occurred on 4 March, but was visible only in the southern hemisphere. The other, which occurred on 28 August,[2] was seen in the eastern part of the Empire and has been generally considered the direct inspiration for the historian's excursus. Thus, Seeck stated that Ammianus based his description of the eclipse on a written source recording the reports of eyewitnesses who had seen the eclipse in the Persian Empire. Roman troops that were in the vicinity of Nisibis in 360, may have seen a small partial eclipse at sunrise.[3] Conversely, Barnes argues that the clause *eodem tempore* indisputably refers to the first eclipse on 4 March, which, we know, was actually unseen in the northern hemisphere: "Ammianus unambiguously dates the eclipse he describes to the late winter or spring of the year."[4] The description of the eclipse immediately follows the political fall of Ursicinus after the loss of Amida in 359, and it precedes the proclamation of Julian as Augustus, who was still in winter-quarters in Paris (20.4). The eclipse of the 28 of August, continues Barnes, occurred too far to the East to be witnessed by Roman troops.[5] One must ask, nonetheless, to what extent it is relevant to identify which eclipse Ammianus supposedly describes, or was inspired by, since the historian clearly gives an inaccurate account derived from literary sources rather than from actual observation. Ammianus merely knew that there were two eclipses in 360, choosing the first one which, in terms of chronology, metaphorically illustrated the span of time between the

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[2] For the dating of these eclipses see: Theodor von Oppolzer, *Canon of Eclipses*, trans. Owen Gingerich (New York: Dover, 1962), 150-51; D. Justin Schove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets, AD 1-1000* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1984), 58.

[3] See Otto Seeck, "Zur Chronologie und Quellenkritik des Ammianus Marcellinus," *Hermes* 41 (1906): 537-38; Boeft, Hengst, and Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus XX*, 26-27.

[4] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 102.

[5] Ibid., 103.

fall of Ursicinus and the appearance of Julian.[6] It is likely that Ammianus established a wrong parallel with the eclipse of the 28 of August, assuming that the first eclipse could be also seen throughout the eastern regions (*per Eoos tractus*). However, the identification of the eclipse is only relevant in terms of its literary effect, since, as I will show, the historian does not seem to have done any further research on the scientific features of this particular eclipse. Ammianus describes as a total eclipse what, according to Schove, was actually an annular one.[7] The historian states that the sky was covered with a dark mist (*caelum subtextum caligine*) through which the stars were visible from dawn until noon (*a primo aurorae exortu ad usque meridiem, intermicabant stellae*); the light of heaven was hidden (*lux caelestis operiretur*) and the solar disk removed completely (*penitus lance abrepta*) from the sight of the world (*e mundi conspectu*). Demandt cites this particular passage as an example of how the ancients tended to describe partial or annular eclipses as total.[8] Further, since even in a total eclipse the stars are visible for no longer than two hours, it is likely that Ammianus, probably inspired by other writers,[9] merely added those gleaming stars as a literary effect. In fact, this approach is not a novelty in the tradition of Graeco-Roman historiography. Ancient historians often inserted eclipses and other natural phenomena with a clear rhetorical purpose. Readers were familiar with the description of eclipses that, for instance, dramatically emphasized a Roman defeat or were a symbolic prelude of the rise of a new emperor. Demandt has collected numerous examples whereby ancient historians do not

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[6] One might compare Procopius' digression on southern Arabia at *Wars* 1.19-20, which distracts attention from Belisarius' defeat at Callinicum in 531. See Averil Cameron, *Procopius: and the Sixth Century* (London, Duckworth, 1985), 147.
[7] Schove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 56-59.
[8] A. Demandt, "Verformungstendenzen in der Überlieferung antiker Sonnen- und Mondfinsternisse," *Abhanlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz.* 10 (1970): 476.
[9] Thucydides reports the visibility of the stars in an eclipse. 2.28 (ed. Jones and Powell).

hesitate to falsify the chronology to link eclipses with certain events.[10] To quote an example from a contemporary of Ammianus, the historian Eunapius transferred the total eclipse of the sun on 20 November 393 to the Battle of Frigidus on 5-6 September 394.[11] Considering this literary tradition, it is likely that by the insertion of this eclipse Ammianus wished to symbolize Ursicinus' political fall described in the previous chapter. Further, the insertion of the astronomical digression might establish a smooth transition between Ursicinus' ostracism and the following chapters dealing with Julian's rise to power. As Szidat suggests, this scientific digression would prevent the reader from asking why Julian does not restore Ursicinus to his former military command.[12]

2. THE ROLE OF WRITTEN SOURCES

I do not believe that Ammianus employed Greek technical manuals in his digression on eclipses. The content and general organization of this excursus could be found in the Latin writers of the classical period, particularly in Cicero. A comparison with passages from *De Republica* and *Somnium* explains why Ammianus inserted those observations about the position of the human observer on earth, a topic totally disconnected from the main subject of the digression.[13] Szidat has convincingly argued that Ammianus' choice of scientific terminology is derived from Chalcidius.[14]

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[10] Among the examples discussed by Demandt we may recall Livy's account of the Battle of Zama in 202 B.C. According to Livy Hannibal's defeat was followed by a solar eclipse (30.38.8). This eclipse must be that of 6 May 203. See "Verformungstendenzen in der Ueberlieferung antiker Sonnen- und Mondfinsternisse," 495 ff.

[11] Zosimus 4.53.3 (ed. Mendelssohn). See Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 105, n. 55.

[12] J. Szidat, *Historischer Kommentar zu Ammianus Marcellinus, Buch XX-XXI*, vol. 1, *Die Erhebung Iulians* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977), 43-44.

[13] Cicero *De Republica* 1.22-3 (ed. and trans. Keyes); *Somnium Scipionis* 6.9-17 (ed. Meissner and Landgraf); *De Divinatione* 2.17 (ed. and trans. Falconer). *De Natura deorum* 2.49-56 (ed. and trans.

Ammianus makes two serious mistakes that confirm that he lacked a comprehensive scientific knowledge of the astronomical matters he discusses. First, within the context of the description of the lunar eclipse (8), Ammianus unexpectedly argues how sometimes the moon could be found under the disc of the sun, being hidden for a time. This is actually the way to describe how the new moon may cause a solar eclipse. This observation, moreover, seems to be contradictory since Ammianus had rightly explained that a lunar eclipse only occurs when the moon is full (7). Is Ammianus confusing lunar and solar eclipses? Does Ammianus not differentiate between the invisibility of the moon during *intermenstrum*, the time of the new moon, and the invisibility during the eclipse? Second, Ammianus states that a lunar eclipse only occurs with a new moon: *non nisi tempore intermenstrui deficere visam usquam lunam* (11). It is unlikely that the historian had understood *intermenstrum* to mean the period of full moon, as Valesius suggested. Ammianus indistinctively employs the term *plenilunium* to mean full moon (7), and in order to explain that a solar eclipse does not occur at every new moon (2), the historian borrows the standard meaning of *intermenstrum* from a passage by Cicero.[15]

The scientific inaccuracy of the astronomical digression and, especially, the fact that Ammianus strongly relied on Latin writers, raises questions about the actual availabity of scientific lore in the fourth century. Shall we assume the same scientific *ignorantia* in the readers of the fourth century? Ammianus must have known that eclipses

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Rackham); Pliny *Naturalis historia*. 2.41-58 (ed. and trans. Rackham); Seneca *Quaestiones naturales* 1.12 (ed. and trans. Corcoran). See Boeft, Hengst and Teitler, *Historical and Philological Commentary on Ammianus XX*, 26 ff.

[14] Szidat, *Historischer Kommentar zu Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. 1, 113-15.

[15] Cicero *De republica* 1.25 (ed. and trans. Keyes). Here, Hengst rightly restores the reading given by the manuscripts: *inter menstrum* or *intermenstrum.* See *Historical and Philological Commentary on Ammianus*, 30-31.

were accurately predicted. In fact, he himself implicitly recognizes this when explaining the conditions under which a solar eclipse occurs (2): the concurrence of the monthly conjunction with the moon passing through one of the nodes takes place at regular intervals (*certis temporum intervalis*). Further, ancient astronomers were able to predict eclipses accurately. One of the interlocutors of Cicero's *De natura deorum* states that eclipses could be predicted for the future.[16] In the biography of the Neoplatonist Proclus, Marinus of Neopolis reports that *hemerographi* predicted an eclipse that took place a year after the philosopher's death.[17] Lastly, the Alexandrian astronomer Theon, Ammianus' contemporary, alluded to the partial solar eclipse of 16 June 364 to confirm the calculation of Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*.[18] Concerning the nature of the solar eclipse, some ancient astronomers made the distinction between solar and annular eclipses. Although Ptolemy stated that annular eclipses could never occur,[19] Proclus makes the distinction clearly, reporting that Sosigenes, the teacher of Aphrodisias, observed an annular eclipse dated as 4 September 164.[20] Consequently, the evidence shows that astronomical knowledge was theoretically available to anyone interested in the subject. However, Ammianus' errors raise important questions regarding the role of astronomy in the traditional curriculum. More specifically, we now need to inquire whether Ammianus' failure to employ this scientific lore was a common shortcoming among the educated Roman elite.

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[16] Cicero *De natura deorum* 2.153 (ed. and trans. Rackham).
[17] Marinus of Neopolis *Vita Procli* 37 (ed. and trans. Masullo).
[18] Anne Tihon, "Le calcul de l'eclipse de soleil du 16 juni 364 p. C. et le *Petit Commentaire* de Théon," *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome* 46-47 (1976-77): 35-79. See Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 104-5.
[19] Ptolemy *Almagest.* 5.14 (ed. Heiberg).
[20] Proclus *Hypotyposis.* 1.19-20; 4.98 (ed. Manutius). See O. Neugebauer, *History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy*, part 1, *The Almagest and Its Direct Predecessors. Babylonian Astronomy* (Berlin: Springer, 1975), 104, n. 4.

3. THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON THE PUBLIC RECEPTION OF THE SCIENTIFIC DIGRESSIONS

It is difficult to assess whether Ammianus' scientific carelessness was detected by his readers. Did the educated elite of the fourth century possess a fair scientific knowledge that may have enabled them to give a critical verdict on Ammianus' astronomical digression? To answer this question we must first determine the actual weight scientific subjects possessed in the traditional curriculum.

In a strict theoretical sense, the Hellenistic concept ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, which the Romans translated as *artes liberales*, refers to a syllabus containing seven different subjects: geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, theory of music, grammar, rhetoric and dialectic. Nevertheless, on a practical level, it is difficult to determine whether all these subjects were actually taught and at what stage. Theorists like Cicero and Quintilian greatly admired the scientific side of the Hellenistic model of education, stating, for example, that the perfect orator should have knowledge of geometry, but they also admitted that it was an ideal. Quintilian never included scientific subjects in his syllabus.[21] The testimony of Theon of Smyrna, writing in the second century A.D., also confirms that mathematics was an extracurricular activity undertaken by a minority of students. Theon composed a five-book mathematical summary entitled *Mathematical Knowledge Useful for the Learning of Plato.* The work deals with the five main areas of

[21] For the role of geometry in the training of the ideal orator, see Cicero. *De republica.* 1.30 (ed. and trans. Keyes). Quintilian provides three main reasons for the study of geometry. First, he believes that geometry exercises train the mind of the orator. Second, knowledge of geometry is a basic need as reading and writing. Third, geometry sometimes provides empirical information so that the orator is able to distinguish between false and true belief: *Institutio oratoria* 1.10.34-49; 1.12.13. However, both Cicero and Quintilian also admitted that their perfect orator never existed: Cicero *De Oratore.* 1.78 (ed. and trans. Sutton and Rackham); *Orator.* 7-10; 19; 101 (ed. and trans. Hendrickson and Hubbell). Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 1.10.4. Quintilian states that the study of science should be restricted to the spare time. *Institutio oratoria* 1.12.13 (ed. and trans. Russell). See Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 281-82.

mathematical application (arithmetic, plane geometry, stereogeometry, astronomy and music), and, as he explains in the preface, it is addressed to all those who were interested in Plato and had never studied mathematics even when they were children.[22] The learning experience of the fifth century Athenian Neoplatonist philosopher Proclus confirms that specialization in mathematics would take place after completing the rhetorical studies. According to his biographer Marinus of Neapolis, Proclus of Constantinople, who only had a literary background in grammar and rhetoric, studied mathematics under Hero while he was studying Aristotle's logic under Olympiodorus.[23] Proclus' commentary on the *Almagest* exemplifies a step further in a long Neoplatonic tradition in which mathematics and astronomy were incorporated within theology. For instance, the exact position of the celestial spheres is relevant as they themselves represent intermediary realities between the intellectual supercelestial world and the world of sensations below the moon. As the influence of Chalcidius indicates, Ammianus' contacts with mathematics and astronomy were possibly derived from his own interest in Neoplatonic thought.

There is also evidence indicating that the Hellenistic ideal of education remained as a prestigious example to follow—few actually undertook both literary and scientific studies—throughout the centuries. Social and intellectual prestige was attached to the study of scientific subjects, an activity undertaken by a minority. The *Historia Augusta*, a work that was probably composed in the 390s, portrays several emperors as embracing the Hellenistic ideal of *paideia*. Hadrian was an expert in arithmetic and geometry, and

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[22] Theon. *Arith.* 1.
[23] Marinus *Vita Proci.* 8-9 (ed. and trans. Masullo).

enjoyed the company of *geometrae* and astrologers.[24] Severus Alexander took an interest in astrology and geometry, and patronized the work of astrologers and architects.[25] Similarly, Septimius Severus was an expert in astrology.[26] Although these accounts may not be historically accurate, they certainly reveal that in the fourth century an education that included scientific subjects enjoyed the prestige that had been always granted to the Hellenistic model of education. The fulfillment of this ideal is further illustrated in Julian's intellectual experience and writings. He studied in Athens and was strongly influenced by Neoplatonic philosophers such as Porphyry and Iamblichus. Within his defense of a Hellenic *paideia* in opposition to non-Hellenic cultures such as Judaism, he emphasizes the relevance of scientific subjects. For instance, he criticizes men from western nations—probably he was referring to Gauls and Iberians—for not having interest in philosophy, geometry or other scientific subjects.[27] Further, Julian rhetorically wonders whether the Jewish people ever created any science or philosophy. He then supplies a brief list of scientific achievements, a well-known account in the Hellenic cultural tradition:

> The theory of the heavenly bodies was perfected among the Hellenes, after the first observations had been made among the barbarians in Babylon. And the study of geometry took its rise in the measurement of the land in Egypt, and from this grew to its present importance. Arithmetic began with the Phoenician merchants, and among the Hellenes in course of time acquired the aspect of a regular science.[28]

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[24] *Scriptores Historiae Augustae. Hadrianus* 16.10 (ed. and trans. Magie).
[25] Ibid., *Severus Alexander*. 27. 5-7; 44. 4 (ed. and trans. Magie).
[26] Ibid., *Septimius Severus*. 3. 9 (ed. and trans. Magie).
[27] Julian *Against the Galileans* 131c (ed. and trans. Wright).
[28] Ibid., 178a-b. See Herodotus *Histories*. 2.109; Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca historica* 1.69. 5; 1.81. 1-2 (ed. and trans. Oldfather *et alii*); B. Vitrac, "Mythes (et réalités?) dans l'histoire des mathématiques grecques anciennes," in *L'Europe mathématique: Histoire, mythes, identité*, ed. Catherine Goldstein, Jeremy Gray and Jim Ritter (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1996), 33-51.

Nevertheless, in reality, the only scientific subject that enjoyed actual popularity among the educated elite of the fourth century was astrology. The poet and orator Ausonius implies a sound knowledge of astrology in his poem "Riddle of the Number Three" (*Griphus Tenarii Numeri*), which he dedicated to Symmachus. One of the examples of the poems regards the stars: "Triple the classification of the stars, according to their situation, distance, and their magnitude (*triplex sideribus positus, distantia, forma*). Neugebauer provides a full scientific interpretation of Ausonius' verse: the three positions refer to the three spatial coordinates in planetary theory: longitude, latitude, and depth. The three distances may refer to apogee, mean distance, and perigee. The Latin *forma* might be the translation of the Greek σχῆμα representing trine, quartile, and opposition.[29] The Sicilian author Julius Firmicus Maternus wrote a treatise on astrology, *Mathesis*, around 337. Firmicus dedicated his work to a government official, Mavortinus, whom Ammianus mentions as praetorian prefect in 356 (16.8.5). The author claims to have made available in Latin for the first time the astrological wisdom of the Egyptians, Babylonians, and Greeks (*Mathesis* 2. Introd.).[30]

Additionally, we can also present evidence showing that mathematics along with other technical subjects such as astronomy were exclusively studied by particular groups within Roman society. In other words, scientific subjects were not part of the traditional curriculum undertaken by the ruling elite. As it has been generally agreed, mathematical education contained a high degree of specialization only when it was subordinated to other disciplines such as architecture, land surveying, and philosophy. Fourth-century legislation regarding technical professions clearly reveals that the emperors were

[29] Neugebauer, *A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy*, vol. 2, 952-53.
[30] For the social status and activities of astrologers in the fourth century, see S. Cuomo, *Pappus of Alexandria and the Mathematics of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 11-16.

concerned with encouraging the teaching of technical subjects within professional guilds, this instruction sometimes taking place when the student was already in his twenties. For instance, in three laws dated 334, 337 and 344, Constantine and his successors Constans and Constantius granted tax immunity to architects, doctors, painters and 33 other technical professions.[31] This legislation also emphasizes that in their spare time they should teach other people, in particular their children, the profession. The first of these laws states that "one needs as many architects as possible" and urges the prefect of the African provinces to promote the study of architecture among youngsters that had undertaken liberal studies (*liberales litteras*). Similarly, the law of 344 compels land-surveyors and architects to promote teaching within the profession: "...with our pronouncement we constrain them to pursue teaching and learning equally. Accordingly, let them enjoy the immunities and raise enough teachers to teach in their turn."

It may also be argued that the term education cannot be limited to the sphere of a particular institution or curriculum. How about the years Ammianus spent at Rome reading and researching for the composition of his work? He could have improved the content of his scientific digressions by using treatises on astronomy. In order to complete our examination on scientific education, we also need to inquire about the nature of these treatises, even if they were read only by a small group of scholars.

Theoretically, Greek astronomical treatises might have been available to Ammianus. For example, Geminus of Rhodes (first century B.C.) was the author of a short factual account of basic concepts of astronomy, mathematical geography and the calendar: *Introduction to Phaenomena.* But the astronomical works that would have a definite influence in antiquity and, later on, through the middle ages were the *Almagest*

[31] *Codex Theodosianus* 13.4.1-4. (334, 337, 344, 374).(ed. and trans. Pharr).

and the *Handy Tables* by Ptolemy (second century A.D.). The 13 books of the *Almagest* are a comprehensive summary of Greek astronomical knowledge, drawing heavily from the theories of previous astronomers such as Apollonius, Hipparchus and Menelaus. The *Handy Tables* contain all the tabular material needed for the computation of ephemerides and eclipses. Nevertheless, it is very unlikely that any of these technical treatises were regularly read at schools. Some ancient scholars even misrepresented the theories exposed in these works. The first attested attempt to comment on the *Almagest* comes from Artemidorus, writing at the end of the second century A.D. As A. Jones has convincingly argued, Artemidorus failed to understand many of Ptolemy's statements and, unfortunately, his commentary was adopted by many subsequent writers.[32] As attested by numerous *scholia*, the only astronomical work that acquired wide acceptance at schools from Hellenistic times onwards was Aratus' *Phaenomena*, a poem of 1154 hexameters written at the end of the third century B.C. This work is actually a versification of a prose treatise by Eudoxus of Cnidos. Despite its numerous mistakes, particularly criticized by Hipparchus (second century B.C.),[33] the poem enjoyed a good reputation. For instance, Callimachus praised it,[34] and Latin translations were made by Varro of Atax, Cicero, Germanicus and Avienus. However, this work was not praised for its "scientific" content. The *Phaenomena* lacks technical terminology and concentrates on literary subjects such as anthropomorphic descriptions of the constellation's shapes. The *Phaenomena* was essentially studied as a literary work. The *scholia* show that most of the

[32] Alexander Jones, *Ptolemy's First Commentator* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1990), 11-12.
[33] Hiparchus *In Arati phaenomena* 1. 6.12 (ed. Manitius).
[34] Callimachus *Epigrams* 29 (ed. and trans. Trypanis).

commentaries on the poem deal with literary matters such as etymology and mythological legends.

Concerning astronomy manuals written in the fourth century, we must turn our attention to Cleomedes, probably from the region of Lysimachia on the Hellespont, and to a group of astronomers connected to the city of Alexandria: Paulus, Pappus and Theon.

Cleomedes wrote a brief astronomical treatise entitled *On the Circular Motions of the Celestial Bodies* around 370.[35] This work lacks originality, being merely a brief compilation of previous treatises. Its relevance, however, lies on the fact that it often refers to Posidonius' astronomical work, and that it exercised some influence upon other authors of Late Antiquity. Courtonne has observed remarkable parallels between Basil's *Hexaemeron* and Cleomedes's treatise.[36] Further, Martianus Capella, writing in the first half of the fifth century, gives the same data as Cleomedes for the variation of the length of daylight.[37] Nevertheless, there is no evidence that Ammianus ever employed Cleomedes' work.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, within his digression on Egypt Ammianus inserted a vivid eulogy of Alexandria, a city, explains the historian, still flourishing in the fine arts, music, literature and scientific studies (22.16.16-8). When Ammianus refers to the practice of astronomy, he clearly suggests that by the time of his visit astronomical studies had been reduced to a minimum: "the consideration of the motion of the universe and of the stars is still kept warm with some, few though they be (*licet raros*) and there are others that are skilled in numbers" (22.16.17).

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[35] *Cleomedis de motu circulari corporum caelestium libri duo* (ed. Ziegler). For the date of composition of this work see Neugebauer, *History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy*, vol. 2, 959-60.
[36] Yves Courtonne, *Saint Basile et l'hellénisme: Étude sur la rencontre de la penseé chrétienne avec la sagesse antique dans l'Hexaéméron de Basile le Grand* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1934), 96 ff.
[37] Ibid., 723.

Broadly speaking, our sources indicate that Alexandria was still an important cultural centre in the fourth century. For instance, we know that there were some public places functioning as libraries at this time. One of these public places was the Serapeum. Some accounts of the destruction of the Serapeum by a Christian mob in 391 mention that the books contained in the building were also burnt. The fourth-century rhetor Aphthonius refers to a building where books were kept and that contributed to the enlightenment of the inhabitants.[38] Eunapius refers to a public school in Alexandria led by the sophist Magnus.[39] Recent excavations in a quarter of the city reveal the existence of some lecture halls that were in use from the fourth century onwards.[40] Other authors confirm Ammianus' overall positive verdict about the importance of Alexandria as a centre for scientific education.[41]

As mentioned above, within the praise of the cultural wonders of Alexandria, Ammianus manages to insert a critical note that, probably, reflects closely contemporary reality: only a few are still engaged in the study of astronomy and mathematics. But who are they? One may wonder whether Ammianus had in mind Paulus, author of the *Isagoge*, and the commentators of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, Pappus and Theon. Furthermore, we also must assess whether Ammianus' claim about the decline of these studies is accurate.

Paulus of Alexandria exercised some influence upon later authors such as Olympiodorus and Rhetorius. The reason for this is probably due to the clarity of his

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[38] *Progymnasmata* 12.40.3-7 (ed. Spengel *Rhetores Graeci*). See Luciano Canfora, *La biblioteca scomparsa* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1986).
[39] Eunapius *Vitae sophistarum* 498 (ed. and trans. Wright).
[40] See Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 17.
[41] Eunapius, Gregory of Nyssa, Libanius. See Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*.

exposition rather than for any original discovery.[42] Likewise, the content of the extant commentaries by Pappus and Theon reveals that these works were merely mathematical manuals lacking guidelines for deeper astronomical research. Pappus' main work is the *Mathematical Collection*, a treatise containing 8 books (of which one and a half are lost). It deals with subjects ranging from astronomy and mechanics to arithmetic and geometry. Aside from the commentary on the *Algamest*, Pappus also wrote commentaries on Euclides' *Elements* and a *Geography*. According to A. Rome, Pappus followed a tradition of a previous commentator of dividing the 13 books of the *Almagest* into chapters called θεωρήματα.[43] As D. Pingree argues, this division prevented students from analyzing Ptolemy's astronomical theories, merely concentrating on the teaching of computational skills.[44] Moreover, Rome argues how Pappus makes some computational errors that were probably undetected by his students.[45] Scholars generally agree that the *Collection* was also a work of little scientific relevance in comparison to previous treatises from the Hellenistic period. A. Jones gives a severe verdict on both the *Collection* and the state of mathematical inquiry in the fourth century:

> The period around the fourth century AD has often been described as a "Silver Age" of mathematics, an illusion for which the bulk of Pappus' extant work, and the abundance of information uniquely preserved in it, are largely responsible. In fact the few occasions on which Pappus claims something as his original discovery give little evidence of a fertile mind.[46]

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[42] Neugebauer, *History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy*, vol. 2, 955.
[43] Adolphe Rome, *Commentaires de Pappus et de Théon d'Alexandrie sur l'Almageste* (Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1931), vol. 1, xviii-xx.
[44] D. Pingree, "The Teaching of the *Almagest* in Late Antiquity," *Apeiron* 27, no. 4 (1994): 76.
[45] Rome, *Commentaires de Pappus et de Théon*, lxxxv.
[46] Alexander Jones, ed. and trans., *Book VII of the Collection* (New York: Springer, 1986), 1.

Conversely, Cuomo has attempted to reverse scholarly criticism on Pappus' scientific achievements by emphasizing the role of mathematics and astronomy in fourth-century society. However, it is never clear from her argumentation whether this role was more pervasive than in previous centuries. Additionally, Cuomo does not provide any evidence that can challenge the scholarly consensus regarding Pappus' low scientific standards and lack of originality.[47]

Similarly, Theon assumes a low level of mathematical competency from his students. The aim of his commentaries is to replicate Ptolemy's calculations. It is very unlikely, for instance, that the 5 books of his *Great Commentary* on the *Handy Tables* would have led to any sort of original research.[48] Questions then arise about what sort of students went to study under Pappus and Theon. Since they bore the title of philosophers, I do not think that they had an official teaching post at the secondary level. There is no evidence that philosophers would have accepted students that were still studying under the grammarian. It seems more probable that they taught a selected group of students who, after finishing their rhetorical studies, wished to acquire a basic knowledge of both mathematics and astronomy in order to undertake the study of philosophy, the last stage of the curriculum.

Therefore, the evidence discussed above suggests that in the fourth century there was a clear intellectual decline in scholarly work on astronomy. An environment of poorer scientific standards is not certainly helpful to anybody attempting to fill the gaps of the traditional curriculum. If fourth-century astronomers from Alexandria, the centre of mathematics and astronomy, are not meeting the high standards of previous centuries,

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[47] Cuomo, *Pappus of Alexandria*, 1-8.
[48] Pingree, "The Teaching of the *Almagest*," 77.

we should not be too harsh at Ammianus' inaccuracies. In addition, one may also wonder about what contemporary readers thought of the historian's treatment of astronomy, including the fact that this eclipse was not seen by any Romans anywhere and was only to be found in manuals. Considering the absence of scientific subjects in the first stages of the traditional curriculum, it does not seem surprising that the general reader did not check the specialized literature to research about an eclipse that had taken place four decades earlier.

CONCLUSION

Ammianus introduced the description of a solar eclipse for the year 363 in order to emphasize the fall of Ursicinus. The relevance of choosing the first solar eclipse of that year is exclusively literary. The great inaccuracy of Ammianus' description of the eclipse of the sun clearly suggests that the historian never checked the data about these two eclipses, particularly the fact that none of them was actually seen by Roman troops anywhere in the Roman Empire. Ammianus included the eclipse primarily to establish a transition between two important parts of the historical narrative: the dismissal of Ursicinus and Julian's rise to power.

For the account of the eclipse of the sun and other astronomical phenomena, Ammianus did not rely on Greek astronomical treatises. Instead, the historian borrowed from Cicero's works that included digressions on astronomy, particularly *De Republica* and *Somnium*.

I have also emphasized that Ammianus' errors in the astronomical digressions should be examined within a broader intellectual context, including the content of the curriculum and the scientific culture in the fourth century. The evidence, which is mainly based on the testimony of ancient authors, reveals that the study of scientific subjects was never part of the traditional curriculum in antiquity. The Hellenistic concept of ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία was an ideal. As happened with the study of geography, scientific subjects received attention only within a literary context. This is perfectly exemplified by the popularity of Aratus' *Phaenomena*. This long poem emphasizes literary aspects such as the anthropomorphic descriptions of the constellations' shapes. The evidence I have discussed suggests that a real study of astronomy was undertaken by only a small group of pupils after finishing their rhetorical studies.

I have also explained that in his praise of Alexandria, Ammianus briefly refers to the fact that only a few are engaged in the study of astronomy. I have argued that this comment is likely a realistic note within a eulogistic description heavily shaped by rhetorical convention. The objectivity of this comment is further sustained by what we know about astronomy in the Alexandria of the fourth century. Astronomers such as Paulus, Pappus and Theon lacked originality, and did not meet the high scientific standards of previous centuries.

Consequently, we must take into consideration the traditional curriculum and the scientific environment in order to contextualize Ammianus' approach to astronomy, including his errors and heavy reliance on Latin literary sources. Besides, this analysis tells much about the reception of the scientific digressions. It is unlikely that the Roman literary public detected Ammianus' errors.

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THE RHETORICAL BACKGROUND AND ITS CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

It is surprising not to find a scholarly work that attempts a systematic study of the impact of a rhetorical education on the narrative of the *RG*. In this chapter, I intend to deal with the influence of the traditional educational background on Ammianus' historical work. This examination also includes an analysis of linguistic devices and forms of speech. In addition, I will also establish connections between the result of this influence and the political, social and educational environment in the fourth century. I have decided to use the framework of the traditional division of oratory into deliberative, epideictic, and judicial, for two fundamental reasons. First, awareness of this categorization was pervasive throughout the different stages of Graeco-Roman education. Second, apart from the existence of an implicit influence of a rhetorical education on the *RG*, its author himself plainly refers to epideictic oratory or, to be more precise, to the language of panegyric in order to describe a part of his narrative devoted to the praise of both Julian and the city of Rome. In this chapter, I will also show that it is necessary to contextualize Ammianus' use of rhetoric. In doing this comparative examination, it is important to emphasize not only the parallels between Ammianus and other contemporary authors, but also the type of oratory Ammianus consciously decided to omit. By identifying a conscious silence, we are in a better position to place the *RG* within the intellectual context of the fourth century.

1. THE IMPACT OF RHETORICAL TREATISES

In the *RG*, there are two clear instances showing Ammianus' acquaintance with the rules prescribed by rhetorical manuals: the Roman digressions (14.6.1-26; 28.4.1-35) and the encomium of Julian (25.4.1-27).

1.1. The Roman Digressions

Ammianus, who probably was at Rome at the end of the fifth century, strongly criticizes the nobility and common people of Rome in two satirical digressions (14.6.1-26; 28.4.1-35). For a provincial from Antioch, a former soldier who had risked his life in the siege of Amida, and an active participant in Julian's Persian expedition, the frivolous and ostentatious behaviour of the Roman upper classes made a great impression. He tells us: "some of these men eagerly strive for statues, thinking that by them they can be made immortal" (14.6.8). Ammianus also gives us a vivid glimpse of the way they carried themselves on the streets of Rome: "Other men, taking great pride in coaches higher than common and in ostentatious finery of apparel, sweat under heavy cloaks, which they fasten about their necks and bind around their very throats" (14.6.9); "others, resplendent in silken garments, as they were to be lead to death, or as if (to speak without any evil omen) they were bringing up the rear preceded by an army, are followed by a throng of slaves drawn up in troops, amid noise and confusion" (28.4.8). In contrast to the traditional ideal of modesty and austerity, which the historian exemplifies with the figures of Cato the Censor and Cn. Cornelius Scipio, "others, though no one questions them, assume a grave expression and greatly exaggerate their wealth, doubling the annual

yield of their fields" (14.6.10) Likewise, much of their boundless idleness is spent banqueting (14.6.14), gambling (28.4.21) and attending charioteer races (28.4.11). Consequently, they avoid and even reject intellectual pursuits: "and while the libraries are shut up forever like tombs, water-organs are manufactured and lyres as large as carriages, and flutes and instruments heavy for gesticulating actors" (14.6.18); "some of them hate learning as they do poison, and read with attentive care only Juvenal and Marius Maximus"(28.4.14). On more than one occasion, the historian refers to the unfriendly attitude of the native Romans towards outsiders. He mentions the distasteful hesitation preceding an invitation to dinner, or the offer of the customary client's dole, to a foreigner (14.6.14). He indignantly denounces how during a food shortage foreigners and experts on the liberal arts were expelled from the city, whereas three thousands dancing girls along with their choruses and masters were allowed to stay (14.6.19). He remarks on the lack of courtesy showed to foreigners, including those to whom they are under obligation (28.4.10). Lastly, each of the two digressions ends with a section devoted to the vices of the urban poor. Ammianus then repeats well-known stereotypes about the lower classes wasting their lives in taverns, the theatre, and at chariot races (14.6.25-6; 28.4.28-34). The urban populace is also accused of xenophobia (28.4.32).

The Roman digressions contain a sort of historical bearing since, despite their colourful distortions, they project impressions of contemporary Rome. Matthews has argued that Ammianus' picture of the senatorial class is very accurate in a number of aspects.[1] According to the evidence of Symmachus' correspondence, a great part of a senator's life was spent in the cultivation of *otium*. Riding, hunting, bathing parties[2] and

[1] Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 1-12.
[2] Symmachus *Epistulae*.5.68 (ed. Seeck); Ibid., 8.23.

time spent in his own villas along the coast of Campania and southern Italy were the sort of activities that shaped a "dignified life".[3] Only the occasional holding of a political office would interrupt this idyllic existence.[4] Even though Symmachus makes serious efforts to present this life as decorous, it is not difficult to imagine that some members of this privileged class gave themselves to the excesses and ostentation Ammianus depicts. In general, the historian's account is not hyperbolic. R. MacMullen has shown how life in the fourth century could be described as theatrical.[5] The pomp and ceremony that are so well reflected in the literature of the panegyrics are not exclusive characteristics of the emperor and his court, but they also permeate other social levels, including the lower classes. The evidence from mosaics, sculpture reliefs and the design of Roman villas reveals a world utterly concerned with forms of grandiose ceremony and strict hierarchy. The colourful clothing of Ammianus' senators is widely evidenced in fourth-century art. The troops of slaves and eunuchs accompanying a Roman aristocrat resemble the emperor's personal guard and officials.[6] Moreover, participation of Roman senators in popular pastimes like gaming with dice seems also plausible. Matthews has effectively showed how closely the nobility and the lower classes shared the physical space of the city.[7] Ammianus was also inspired by his own experiences in the city. He is in all probability the *honestus advena* who failed to establish sincere contacts with some

[3] For a reconstruction of Symmachus' travels in Italy between 395 and 402 see Otto Seeck, ed. *Q. Aurelii Symmachi quae supersunt* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1883; reprint 1961), lx ff.
[4] See Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 9-10.
[5] R. MacMullen, "Some Pictures in Ammianus Marcellinus," *Art Bulletin* 46 (1964): 435-55.
[6] See R. J. A. Wilson, *Piazza Armerina* (London: Granada, 1983).
[7] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 418-23.

members of the Roman aristocracy (14.6.12). He may have been among those foreigners expelled during the food shortage of 384.[8]

Apart from containing a certain degree of veracity, the digressions are also a stylistic *tour de force*. Ammianus includes a long list of colourful vignettes of life in the city, creating an environment inhabited by histrionic characters.[9] In this sense, one may wonder whether he is consciously imitating the literary conventions of Roman satire. By establishing parallels in rhetorical tropes, topics, victims of satire, and vocabulary, R. Rees argues that the historian consciously uses Juvenal's *Satires*.[10] However, most of his parallels can be also explained as being common features of the satirical genre in general. Additionally, one of the problems with Rees' view is that Ammianus explicitly criticizes the Roman nobility for reading Juvenal (28.4.14). Borrowing from an author that the historian openly criticizes would have considerably undermined the seriousness of his

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[8] Traditionally, the expulsion of foreigners mentioned by Ammianus had been dated to 383, when the member of the Anician family, Anicius Auchenius Bassus, was prefect of the city. Indeed, Ammianus criticizes the powerful Anicii family in 16.8.16. Regarding Olybrius, city prefect in 368, the historian remarks: "for almost his whole private life, since he was inclined to luxury, he spent in playhouses and love affairs" (28.4.1). Nevertheless, Ammianus' main target is Sextus Petronius Probus, a Christian and the head of that family: 27.11.1-6; 30.5.3-10. Pack suggests that this individual was probably behind some of the invectives contained in Ammianus' Roman digressions. Thus, the criticism of Probus' vast states (27.11.1) matches the comments about the nobles boasting of their great properties (14.6.12). The remark about Probus being determined to defend his clients and slaves who have been accused of crimes (27.11.4) is echoed in 28.4.16, regarding a noble who punishes a slave if he is slow in fetching water, but defends him against the charge of murder. See Roger Pack, "The Roman Digressions of Ammianus Marcellinus," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 84 (1953): 181-89, n. 28. However, J. Palanque argues that, although it is true that there was a crop failure in 383, Ammianus refers to the expulsion as taking place in the following year, when Symmachus was prefect of the city. Actually, the crisis was not originated by a crop-failure but by a delay of importations due to adverse winds. The evidence of the expulsion comes from Ambrose, *De Officiis* 3.7.47-51 (ed. and trans. Davidson) and Symmachus *Epistulae* 2.7 (ed. Seeck). See Palanque, "Famines à Rome," 346-56; André Chastagnol, *La Préfecture urbaine à Rome sous le Bas-Empire* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1960), 268; *Les Fastes de la préfecture de* Rome, 223; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 2.

[9] Following the tradition of previous ancient historians, Ammianus conceived history as containing a moral lesson. Consequently, the historian ferociously criticizes numerous characters by emphasizing their vices, often introducing grotesque exaggerations such as animal metaphors. The Roman digressions should be examined within this particular scope. See the section on kindred virtues and vices in the *RG* in Seager, *Ammianus Marcellinus: Seven Studies*, 18-42.

[10] Roger Rees, "Ammianus Satiricus," in *The Late Roman World and Its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and David Hunt. (London: Routledge, 1999), 141-55.

digressions. As indicated above, a significant part of the content of these passages is based on sketches from contemporary Rome as well as on Ammianus' own experience.

In general, scholars have been cautious about establishing a close link between Juvenal and Ammianus, merely referring to a general affinity between both writers rather than to a conscious borrowing as suggested by Rees.[11] Indeed, this likeness is easily understood in view of Juvenal's great popularity in the fourth century.[12] What we will now examine is how this resemblance could have been accomplished. While it is indeed likely that Ammianus borrowed from Juvenal's *Satires*, as Rees argues, it is clear that he was also familiar with the rhetorical mechanism that was necessary to produce the distorting language of the satirical genre. Put another way, it is plausible that Ammianus' readers saw these passages as belonging to a Latin satirical tradition that goes beyond the literary echoes from Juvenal.

Pack argues that in the Roman digressions Ammianus manipulates common rhetorical patterns as described in works such as the treatises of Menander Rhetor.[13] According to Menander, the main sections of the praise of a city are: θέσις (the advantages of its situation), γένος (the glorious facts of its founding and settlement), and 'επιτήδευσις (the interests and virtues of its citizens).[14] Pack shows that Ammianus' catalogue of vices is the reverse face of the ἐπιτήδευσις. He also notes that the historian

[11] For an extensive bibliography about Ammianus' attitude towards Juvenal, see Smith, "A Note on Ammianus Marcellinus and Juvenal," 23-24.
[12] Gilbert Highet, *Juvenal the Satirist: A Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), 180-90.
[13] Pack, "The Roman Digressions," 181-89. Menander the "sophist", an orator and teacher of rhetoric, came from Laodicea-on-Lycus, a flourishing city of south-west Asia Minor. Numerous *testimonia* clearly show that in Byzantine times Menander was considered the authority on epideictic oratory, and that both the treatises were attributed to him. Scholars, however, have also suggested two different authors based on the fact that the treatises are not part of the same whole and were written at different times. Nevertheless, for the sake of simplicity, scholars continue to refer to Menander Rhetor as the author of both works, assuming the possibility that the same author wrote two independent treatises at different times. For a summarized discussion of the scholarship on the date and authorship of the treatises, see Russell and Wilson, *Menander Rhetor*, xxxiv-xl.
[14] *Menander.Rhetor* 1.346-67 (ed. and trans. Russell and Wilson).

was familiar with the other two divisions of the encomium. The preface to the first Roman digression, in which Ammianus uses the analogy with the ages of man to illustrate Rome's birth, growth, maturity and senescence, would belong to the γένος section. And, in the description of Constantius' entry into Rome (16.10.13-7), the city's grandeur is evoked in terms that would perfectly match the features of the θέσις. Further, Pack notes that rhetorical rules of the type contained in Menander's treatise were also employed by Ammianus' contemporaries. In the *Antiochus*, Libanius closely follows Menander in the first two divisions: θέσις[15] and γένος.[16] Libanius, however, focuses on the social rather than on the political aspect in the third section, praising the virtues of the Antiochene *curia* and plebs. Pack then suggests that Libanius's social division is echoed in the Roman digressions as Ammianus systematically deals with the vices of the aristocracy and the lower classes. Lastly, Pack shows that the inhospitality of Rome was a popular rhetorical trope that orators such as Libanius and Themistius incorporated in the ἐπιτήδευσις. Libanius praises the hospitality of Antioch to the disadvantage of Rome as follows:

> Thus our population is well adapted to the land and the nature of the land to the population, so that we have never yet been forced to outrage Zeus Xenius by treating our guests from abroad with cruelty—this in spite of having before us the example of Rome, which converts a dearth of provisions into abundance by expelling foreigners whenever such emergency arises.[17]

[15] Libanius *Orationes* 11.12-41 (ed. Foerster).
[16] Ibid., 11.42-131 (ed. Foerster).
[17] Libanius *Orationes* 11.174 (ed. Foerster).

In a speech addressed to Theodosius dated to summer 384,[18] Themistius praises Constantinople's hospitality, while criticizing Rome's unfriendliness to foreigners.[19] Pack, therefore, concludes that the model for Libanius' and Themistius' passages was a manual similar to Menander's treatise, since a section of the praise of the city follows the same pattern in dealing with hospitality towards foreigners.

That ancient writers may have perceived the satirical genre as a parody, or a reverse, of the rules of oratory is highly plausible. For instance, the *Satires* of Juvenal, which were particularly popular in the fourth century, perfectly exemplify the connection between satire and rhetoric. Rhetoric, and more specifically declamatory rhetoric, the rhetoric of school exercises, pervades the work of Juvenal. In the *Satires*, rhetoric is not only a subject to be parodied for its comic artificiality, but also a useful tool to reverse its own rules.[20] A general awareness of the rhetorical mechanism of satire would reinforce Pack's argument: the Roman digressions are a reversal of the rules to compose an encomium. Nevertheless, Pack's interpretation is not completely satisfactory. He merely assumes that manuals of Greek rhetoric were Ammianus' only source. Since satire is a genre deeply rooted in the Roman literary tradition, one must inquire whether Ammianus used rhetorical tropes that were commonly explained in Latin manuals of oratory. In addition, Pack's thesis fits only the section regarding the inhospitality of the inhabitants of Rome. I propose to examine whether the Latin rhetorical background could provide a

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[18] Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, 210.
[19] Themistius *Orationes* 18.222a (ed. Schenkl, Downey, and Norman).
[20] See Josué de Decker, *Juvenalis declamans: Étude sur la réthorique declamatoire dans les Satire de Juvénal* (Gand: E. van Goethen & cie., 1913); Inez Scott Ryberg, *The Grand Style in the Satires of Juvenal* (Northampton, Mass.: Smith College, 1927); William Scovil Anderson, *Essays on Roman Satire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

more comprehensive framework to explain the source of both topics and stylistic features of Ammianus' Roman digressions.

Quintilian supplies a useful summary of the topics that were more popular in the schools of rhetoric:

> Theses which are taken from comparisons of things—for example, "Is country life or town life to be preferred?" "Does the lawyer or the soldier deserve the greater praise?"—are remarkably attractive and rewarding ways of exercising the skill of speaking; they are extremely helpful both for deliberative and also for forensic duties, for the second of the two themes I have suggested is handled very fully by Cicero in *Pro Murena*. Other theses are relevant almost entirely to the deliberative genre: "Should a man marry?" "Should one compete for office?" Simply add specific persons, and these too become *suasoriae*. [21]

It is not hard to realize that these topics were sources of inspiration for Roman satirists. In the beginning of his first satire, Horace makes comparisons between different professions and life-styles: the trader, the soldier, the lawyer and the farmer, the country dweller and the city dweller.[22] In the third *Satire*, Juvenal strongly criticizes life in the city, condemning the greed, corruption, selfishness, and inhospitality of its inhabitants. Juvenal's criticism is occasionally interrupted by references to the idyllic life in the country. In the Roman digressions, Ammianus also manipulates this rhetorical framework, although he does not include any situation of debate or counterpart, but exclusively concentrates on the vices of the urban population.

The connection between rhetorical instruction and the satirical genre also explains many other choices Ammianus made in matters of content and style. In particular, two

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[21] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 2.4.24-5 (ed. and trans. Russell).
[22] Horace *Satirae* 1.1.1-12 (ed. and trans. Fairclough).

rhetorical devices play a crucial part in the composition of the Roman passages: *loci communes* and *exempla*.

An important element for the training in rhetoric was the *loci communes*. The elder Seneca lists four main types of commonplaces: *de fortuna*, *de crudelitate*, *de saeculo*, and *de divitiis*.[23] They were topics the orator should adequately employ in a number of contexts. Ammianus clearly uses two of them, *de saeculo* (contemporary decadence) and *de divitiis* (the advantages and inconveniences of wealth), as the pervading subject matter of both digressions.

In declamatory exercises, behavior was often described in terms of *exempla* both positive and negative. Quintilian discusses the use of *exempla* in *Institutio oratoria*.[24] Not surprisingly, satirists exploited the negative *exempla* or simply reversed the positive ones. For instance, in *Aeneid* 6.756-853 (ed. and trans. Fairclough), Vergil inserts a long catalogue of virtuous people, the descendants of Aeneas. In the first *Satire*, Juvenal presents a long list of depraved people who become a sort of parody of Vergil's *exempla*. Similarly, Ammianus deals with the degeneracy of the Roman nobility by inserting a long list of grotesque vignettes stressing their disgusting behavior. In addition, the historian explicitly refers to the *exempla* of the past as a counterpoint of the vices of present Rome:

> They are clearly unaware that their forefathers, through whom the greatness of Rome was so far flung, gained renown, not by riches, but by fierce wars, and not differing from the common soldiers in wealth, mode of life, or simplicity of attire, overcame all obstacles by valor. For that reason the eminent Valerius Publicola was buried by a contribution of money, and through the aid of her husband's friends the needy wife of Regulus and her children were supported. And the daughter of Scipio received her dowry from the public treasury, since the nobles blushed to look

[23] Seneca *Controversiae* 1.23 (ed. and trans. Winterbotton).
[24] 5.11 (ed. and trans. Russell).

upon the beauty of this marriageable maiden long unsought because of the absence of a father of modest means (14.6.11).

Consequently, it is necessary to consider seriously the impact of Roman rhetorical theory in the composition of the Roman digressions. Pack's thesis about the influence of Greek oratory upon these passages is insufficient as it exclusively explains the topic of Roman inhospitality. However, an examination of Roman rhetorical theory in connection with the stylistic patterns of satirical literature helps to understand many of Ammianus' composition techniques. This thesis also provides us with an insight into the socio-historical context of the Roman digressions. The historian addressed a Roman audience whose rhetorical education allowed them to appreciate the rhetorical twists that were implicit in these satirical passages.

1.2. The Encomium of Julian[25]

Following an account of the death of each emperor, Ammianus inserts an obituary notice, in which he gives a summary of the virtues and vices of the imperator. This type of narrative partly resembles the manner of the classical biographer, who solely attributes to the character of ruler's actions that a modern historian would understand in terms of the historical context. In a strict rhetorical sense, the obituaries also recall the ancient

[25] A section of the obituary (25.4.16-8) deals with Julian's shortcomings. Ammianus criticizes Julian's impulsive personality and love of popularity, his excessive interest in divination and, overall, his superstitious beliefs. The emperor is also censored for his decree forbidding Christian teachers to teach rhetoric and grammar, and for his imposition of curial duties on men possessing valid exemptions. See Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, 72 ff. This list of faults is largely consistent with the narrative. For instance, the historian had already referred to the unfair edict on professors of rhetoric (22.10.7), and to the enforcement of membership to the curial order (22.9.12). The discrepancy between the historian's general praise of Julian and this severe criticism is accurately emphasized by Thompson: "It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that Julian's whole career as Augustus is criticized in every particular by his admirer." "Ammianus Marcellinus," in *Latin Historians*, ed. T. A. Dorey (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1966), 147.

tradition of the funeral oration, a Greek genre that shaped the old Roman *laudatio funeralis*.[26] Furthermore, they display Ammianus' knowledge of certain techniques of epideictic oratory designed to influence the reader's opinion. Assessing to what extent these obituaries match the ideological expectations of the reader is not my goal. I will discuss, however, the nature of their rhetorical background from a strictly formal perspective.

The sophistication in the display of epideictic techniques is particularly evident in the laudatory section of the obituary of Julian.[27] Ammianus starts by enumerating the four cardinal virtues defined by the philosophers (*ut sapientes definiunt*): *temperantia*, *prudentia*, *iustitia* and *fortitudo*. Then, four external manifestations of virtue are added: *scientia rei militaris*, *auctoritas*, *felicitas* and *liberalitas* (25.4.1). It is necessary to emphasize that the content of this eulogy is largely consistent with other sections of the narrative. The emperor's *temperantia* is defined as that subjected to the edicts of Lycurgus (16.5.1). His *fortitudo militaris* is emphasized when at Strasburg Julian himself turned the fleeing cavalry back into battle (16.12.38-9). Julian is *prudens* when, due to lack of evidence, he released an ex-governor of Narbonensis Gaul who had been accused of embezzlement (18.1.4). And the historian praises Julian's *scientia rei militaris* in his campaign of 356 in Gaul (16.2-4). The account of this particular campaign, moreover, is introduced in an epic tone echoing the Aeneid: "Now, since—as the lofty bard of Mantua said of old—a greater work I undertake, a greater train of events ariseth before me"

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[26] See Polybius. 6.53-4. 1; Cicero *Brutus* 16.62 (ed. and trans. Hendrickson). Cicero states that these speeches were originally brief and unadorned: *De Oratore* 2.84.341 ff.

[27] Though here I will exclusively focus on the laudatory section of the obituary, it is necessary to emphasize that rhetoricians and grammarians included a critical section as part of the encomium exercises. This is, for instance, Hermogenes' approach. See Charles Sears Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic (to 1400) Interpreted from Representative Works* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 23-38. Similarly, the historian includes a censorious section. See n. 23.

(15.9.1).[28] This laudatory attitude is again announced, as I mentioned earlier, when the historian solemnly anticipates the use of an encomiastic style to depict Julian's deeds (16.1.3). The eulogy of Julian, therefore, seems to be a logical culmination of this type of writing.

The insertion of a list of virtues in an epideictic speech has a long history in the rhetorical tradition.[29] It is very likely that by the fourth century B.C. the school of sophistic rhetoric had already systematized the form of encomium, which often included the mention of the cardinal virtues in the praise of a particular ruler or hero. Through Agathon's encomiastic speech on Eros in the *Symposium*, Plato satirizes the excessive self-awareness of the orator delivering a eulogy: "First I will explain how to speak, secondly I will speak." In the same speech, Agathon argues that Eros is the best because it possesses the four cardinal virtues: justice, temperance, courage and wisdom. Plato is certainly parodying the traditional way of praising great men. Aeschylus' Amphiaraus, for instance, was "a moderate, just, noble, reverent man".[30] Demosthenes speaks of the three noblest virtues: courage, justice and temperance.[31] However, the first attested serious attempt to write a prose encomium of a contemporary is Isocrates' eulogy on Evagoras, the recently deceased ruler of Cypriot Salamis. This particular speech became a much-studied model for later rhetors. Menander mentions Isocrates as well as evokes Evagoras' qualities in his prescriptions for the *basilikos logos*.[32] Ammianus' vague reference to the authority of the "philosophers" might refer to this long literary tradition.

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[28] Vergil *Aeneid.* 7.44-5 (ed. and trans. Fairclough: *maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo,/ maius opus moveo.*
[29] See Russell and Wilson, *Menander Rhetor*, xiv-xv.
[30] *Septem contra Thebas* 610 (ed. and trans. Smyth)
[31] Demosthenes *De Corona* 215 (ed. and trans. Vince).
[32] Menander Rhetor 2.368 ff (ed. and trans. Russell and Wilson); the reference to Isocrates is in 372.5 ff. For the conventional list of four virtues, see 373.5 ff.

It is therefore difficult to single out a particular author as the historian's direct influence. As regards the moral idealization of the ruler, Ammianus may have been inspired by the treatises on kingship by Dio Chrysostom and Aelius Aristides. These two authors, for instance, greatly influenced Themistius, whose panegyrics evolved on philosophical matters.[33] Moreover, it is also likely that Cicero, an author who greatly influenced Ammianus, directly inspired him.[34] In the formal articulation of the eulogy itself, Ammianus follows the model that can be found in Isocrates' *Evagoras*, in Menander and in the elementary treatises or *progymnasmata*: the narrative of actions follows the enumeration of virtues.[35] Apart from the impact of the educational background, contemporary literature was probably a source of inspiration as well. Indeed, Mamertinus, Libanius and Julian himself—Ammianus certainly read some of Julian's letters and speeches (16.5.7)—made use of the conventional catalogue of the ruler's virtues.[36]

2. THE IMPACT OF ORATORY ON THE *RES GESTAE*

In this section, I will examine to what extent different forms of oratory had an influence on the style of both the historical narrative and the speeches contained in the *RG*. The established division of oratory (deliberative, epideictic, and judicial) is not an

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[33] See Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, 9-10.

[34] Cicero refers to this conventional list of four virtues: *De Officiis* 1.15 ff (ed. and trans. Miller); *De Inventione* 2.15. 9 (ed. and trans. Hubbell).

[35] See Menander Rhetor 2.373 ff (ed. and trans. Russell and Wilson). For the treatment of the *encomium* in *progymnasmata* see Clark, *Rhetoric in Graeco-Roman Education*, 194-98. Conversely, Xenophon's *Agesilaus*, a work that exercised a notable influence in later rhetorical education as Menander's echoes of its preface show (368, 9; 370, 10; 369, 18), has a different pattern: the account of actions precedes the list of virtues.

[36] Mamertinus 11.21.4 (trans. Rodgers); Libanius.*Orationes* 18.281 (ed. Foerster). Julian *Orationes* 1.10c; 2.79b, 95a-96a (ed. and trans. Wright).

anachronistic academic device, but an essential intellectual framework firmly rooted in the Graeco-Roman educational tradition. Awareness of these three divisions is already evidenced in Isocrates' works. In his *Contra Sophistas*, he criticizes those who teach political discourse (πολιτικούς λόγους).[37] In section 20 of the same work, he repeats his criticism as well as includes a derogatory comment on forensic oratory (δικανικός λόγος). Isocrates' repugnance for judicial speeches is evident elsewhere.[38] The best technical division of oratory is, however, that of Aristotle. His classification is based on the attitude of the hearer. He is either a θεωρός or a κριτής. The κριτής has some particular interest in the speech and is expected to make a decision, as one listening to a legal argument or to a speech in the assembly. The term θεωρός refers to the hearer of epideictic oratory. His main purpose is entertainment, which makes him analogous to the spectator in a theatre. He would then judge a speech as a display of intellectual ability.[39] Subsequent authors of rhetorical treatises would also follow this fundamental division.[40] That the principles of oratory were not exclusively applied to the composition of speeches but were also relevant to other literary genres is evidenced by the testimony of the ancient writers themselves. In a passage of Cicero's *De Oratore*, Antonius, one of the speakers of the dialogue, argues that history should follow the rules of oratory. More specifically, Antonius proposes that the old foundations of annalistic history be subjected to the precepts of rhetoric, advising the use of a fluent style that would replace the harshness of forensic speech.[41] In a letter addressed to his friend Lucceius, Cicero advises him how to

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[37] Isocrates *Contra Sophistas* 3 (ed. and trans. Norlin and Hook).
[38] Isocrates *Panathenaicus* 271; *Panegyricus* 11; *Antidosis.* 1 (ed. and trans. Norlin and Hook).
[39] Aristotle *Rhetorica* 1.3.1-6 (ed. and trans. Freese).
[40] *Auctor ad Herennium.*1.2.2 (ed. and trans. Caplan); Cicero *De Oratore* 1.31.141 (ed. and trans. Sutton and Rackham); *De inventione* 1.5.7 (ed. and trans. Hubbell); Quintilian *Institutio oratoria.* 3.4.6; 7.1; 8.7.63 (ed. and trans. Russell). Menander Rhetor 3.331 (ed. and trans. Russell and Wilson).
[41] *De Oratore* 2.12.51-64 (ed. and trans. Sutton and Rackham).

write the historical work in which his friend is engaged: Lucceius should employ an embellished style that may eventually sacrifice historical truth if praise is involved.[42] Furthermore, Quintilian acknowledges the links of both poetry and history with oratory.[43] Dionysius of Halicarnassus conceives of the historical genre as encomiastic, emphasizing the nobility of the subject matter.[44] The emperor Lucius Verus instructed Fronto to write a panegyrical account of his war against the Parthians. Fronto replied using the term *historia* for this work.[45] Lastly, in the treatise *How to Write History*, Lucian criticizes the panegyrical excesses to be found in Fronto's preface.[46] Lucian admits, however, the influence of encomiastic literature on history, taking for granted the dignity of the historical theme.[47]

Awareness of the intellectual framework described above is essential in order to understand Ammianus' stylistic approach to historical representation. In the next sections, I will show that the historian, consciously or unconsciously, reflects in both his narrative and speeches the stylistic features implied in the traditional rhetorical categorization. In this analysis, I will also establish connections with both the educational practices and socio-political environment of the fourth century.

2.1. Deliberative Oratory.

In the work of Thucydides, speeches have a prominent role for their formal perfection and political significance: they are literary masterpieces accurately echoing the

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[42] Cicero *Epistulae ad familiares* 5.12. (ed. and trans. Shackleton Bailey). For an extensive analysis of Cicero's ideas on history see Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography*, 70-116.
[43] Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 10.1.28; 31; 33 (ed. and trans. Russell).
[44] Dionysius Halicarnassensis *Antiquitates Romanae* 1.2-3; 2.1 (ed. and trans. Cary).
[45] Fronto *Epistulae* 2.3 (ed. and trans. Haines).
[46] Lucian *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit.* 7-15 (ed. and trans. Harmon, Kilburn and Macleod).
[47] *Ibid.*, 45.

dynamism of the Athenian political life. The political vitality of this oratory is to a certain extent kept in the works of Sallust, Livy and Tacitus, but practically lost by the fourth century, when debates of the senate or even the portrayal of the tension between senate and emperor lacked political authenticity. This situation is reflected in the *RG* where deliberative speeches are short, playing a limited role in the narrative. Taking into consideration the broader political context of the fourth century, we need to inquire whether Ammianus' reluctance to represent political debate is a decision that truly describes the entire range of political engagements. In fact, the fourth century left us some examples of deliberative oratory. The senates of both Rome and Constantinople were in theory consultative bodies, advising the emperor and serving as the local councils of their cities. Their more relevant function was to give support to decisions already made by the emperor or his staff.[48] Therefore, it is not surprising that the speeches were mostly conciliatory and panegyrical. Indeed, it would be unrealistic to draw a clear line between deliberative and epideictic oratory in many of those speeches. More specifically, examples of deliberative oratory are, for instance, Symmachus' third *Relatio*, in which he asks Gratian to restore the Altar of Victory to the Senate,[49] and Libanius' belligerent rhetoric in defense of Hellenic culture as well as the privileges of the Antiochene curia. Although Ammianus failed to represent speeches that directly reflected the religious and ideological concerns of the period, we can still trace the impact of deliberative oratory on some passages of the *RG*.

2.1.1. The General's Speech.

[48] See Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 523-62.
[49] Barrow, *Prefect and Emperor*, 32-47.

The so-called "general's speech" would be delivered to the army at a time of crisis or before a battle. This speech is full of commonplaces carefully designed to undermine the power of the enemy and the danger of battle, and to stress the superiority of the troops addressed.[50] Such a speech would often include epideictic features, particularly when they enthusiastically recall the glorious past. Though rhetoricians did not pay much attention to this particular genre of oratory—only Theon and Hermogenes deal with them as one of the personifications practiced in schools of grammar and rhetoric—the general's speech was a literary set-piece with a long history from Homer on.[51] From a very early time, it was commonly agreed that historians introduced these speeches as a literary convention, as a stylistic tool remote from the real conditions of the battlefield.[52]

Ammianus assigns a series of short speeches to imperial personages. These speeches are addressed to the army, and take place in a stereotyped ceremonial background, either as *adlocutiones* before campaigns or battles or at the elevation of a Caesar to the imperial rank. By order of appearance in the historical narrative, these speeches can be described as follows. In 354, the emperor Constantius addresses the troops, asking them for their support to make peace with the Alamanni (14.10.11-5). Constantius characterizes himself as a cautious and prudent advisor (*ut cunctator et cautus, utiliumque monitor*), and a peace-loving prince (*princeps tranquillus*). The following year, Constantius proclaims Julian as Caesar before the army. In a speech, the emperor presents the appointment as an integral part of the defense of Gaul (15.8.5-8; 10.12-4). In 357, just before the battle of Strasburg, the Caesar Julian warns the troops

[50] See Burgess, *Epideictic Literature*, 209-14.
[51] 2.115; 15, 27 (Spengel *Rhetores Graeci*). See Burgess, *Epideictic literature*, 211.
[52] See Polybius 12.25 (ed. and trans. Paton). Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*, 20.

about the dangers and hardships lying ahead (16.12.9-12). Following the victory over the Limigantes in 358, Constantius delivers a speech, mentioning the previous military successes against the Sarmatians and Quadri in Illyricum. The emperor defends the advantage of a policy based on benevolence: *lenitatis tempus aderat tempestivae* (17.13.26-33). In 360, the army illegally hails Julian as Augustus. In a brief speech, Julian rejects the title, advising the soldiers to return to their homes (20.4.16). On the following day, however, Julian addresses the troops as the new emperor. The emperor demands loyalty and determination from the soldiers, recalling their resolution and courage in previous campaigns. Julian clearly implies that moral values are decisive for the success of an emperor: *numquam a proposito recte vivendi deiectus sum* (20.5.3-7). The next two speeches immediately precede the final military confrontation between Julian and Constantius in 361. Julian's speech reads like a panegyric as he briefly displays his military record fighting the Alamanni and Franks as the best guarantee to defeat Constantius. In the second part of the speech, Julian proposes a specific plan of action: taking possession of the utmost parts of Dacia (21.5.2-8). In his address, Constantius compare the future of Julian with the fate of previous enemies of the state, Magnentius and Gallus (23.5.16). Julian's address to the army before the war against the Persians in the same year is probably one of the most elaborated and dramatic speeches in the *RG* (23.5.16-23). In the beginning of April 363, the troops of Julian crossed the river Khabur near its confluence with the Euphrates at Circesium. After every man went over, the emperor crossed the Khabur and had the bridges dismantled (23.5.4). The army then went to Zaitha and marched for a few days in the direction of Dura. According to Ammianus' narrative, Julian gathered the troops together and addressed them somewhere

between Zaitha and Dura, at the end of the second full day of march. In his speech, the emperor recalls that the Romans had entered the Persian Empire before. He refers to the successes of the Republican generals (Lucullus, Pompey and Ventidius) and, more recently, of his predecessors: Trajan, Verus and Septimius Severus, Roman emperors who had returned victorious from Persia. The Emperor Gordian would have returned victorious, continues Julian, had the praetorian prefect Philip and his supporters not betrayed him. He was killed in the place where he is now buried. Julian reminds the troops of the tomb of Gordian, which they had just seen during the march. The speech continues in a similar fashion, using *exempla* from the past to guide the army towards a glorious future. He offers his life in sacrifice for the Roman world after the example of the noble families of the Curtii, Mucii and Decii. The emperor clearly implies that the survival of the Roman world depends on the utter destruction of the Persian Empire, recalling the fate of Carthage, Numantia and Fidenae (23.5.16ff). Lastly, two *adlocutiones* delivered by the emperor Valentinian end this list of general's speeches. In 364, Valentinian addresses the troops after being declared emperor. He asks for their loyalty, promising the election of a colleague on the imperial throne (26.2.6-10). In the following year, Valentinian proclaims his son Gratian emperor before the troops (27.6.6-9; 12-3).

The actual political content of the speeches described above is rather limited. These speeches either solemnly announce a new imperial proclamation or voice a particular course of action. They lack the potential to provoke political debate, and include certain rhetorical features characteristic of epideictic oratory. As I mentioned above, the speakers often base their arguments or plans for future action on an account of

their previous military deeds. Furthermore, only imperial personages deliver these *adlocutiones*, accurately reflecting the political absolutism of the fourth century. Given all these characteristics, the significance of these speeches lies in their ability to reflect ceremonial aspects of the political and social relations of the fourth century. This capability is perfectly articulated through the insertion of a number of ceremonial elements emphasizing the physical setting of each *adlocutio*. The most conspicuous of these elements can be summarized as follows.[53] A trumpet call solemnly announces some of these speeches: *tubarumque concinente clangore* (16.12.7); *classico ad contionem exercitu convocato* (21.5.1); *concinentibus tubis* (21.13.9); *signo itaque per lituos dato* (23.5.15). The progression towards the tribunal is almost always mentioned: *tribunali adsistens* (14.10.11); *tribunali ad altiorem suggestum erecto Augustus insistens* (15.8.4); *tribunali insistens* (17.13.25); *progressus princeps ambitiosius solito tribunal ascendit* (20.5.1) *saxeo suggestu insistens* (21.5.1); *ut eam ad firmanda promptius adigeret imperanda tribunali celso insistens* (21.13.9); *ipse aggere glebali adsistens* (23.5.15); *constructo tribunali insistens* (24.3.3); *progressus Valentinianus in campum permissusque tribunal ascendere Celsius structum* (26.2.2); *cum Gratianus venisset, progressus in campum tribunal escendit* (27.6.5). The description of the speaker's retinue is an element that is present in practically each speech: *circumdatus potestatum coetu celsorum* (14.10.11); *quod aquilae circumdederunt et signa* (15.8.4); *cuneatim cicumsistentes adloquitur* (16.12.8); *signisque ambitus et aquilis et agmine multiplicium potestatum* (17.13.25); *signis aquilisque circumdatus et vexillis saeptusque tutius armatorum cohortium globis* (20.5.1); *stipatusque solito densius* (21.13.9); *coronaque*

[53] For a comprehensive catalogue of the standard elements of the *adlocutiones* in the *RG*, see P. H. O'Brien, "Speeches and Imperial Characterization in Ammianus Marcellinus" (Ph.D. diss., Boston: Boston University, 2002), Appendix 1.

celsarum circumdatus potestatum (23.5.15); *splendoreque nobilium circumdatus potestatum* (27.6.5). Ammianus frequently inserts a glimpse of imperial deportment and attitude: *eumque manu retinens dextera* (15.8.4); *stansque imperator immobilis* (15.8.10); *iamque, ut apparebat, fidentior* (21.5.1); *ad serenitatis speciem et fiduciae vultu formato* (21.13.9); *talia ore sereno disseruit favorabilis studio concordi cunctorum* (23.5.15); *ad indignationem plenam gravitatis erectus* (24.3.3); *elata propere dextera, vi principis fiducia pleni,*(26.2.5); *circumsaeptum aquilis et vexillis agminibusque diversorum ordinum ambitiose stipatum iamque terribilem duxerunt in regiam* (26.2.11); *dextra puerum apprehensum, productumque in medium* (27.6.5). Immediately after the speech, Ammianus introduces a number of formulaic features in order to echo the reaction of the audience. These elements clearly emphasize the visual and ceremonial aspect of the imperial address. Acclamations, gestures and noise follow most of these *adlocutiones*: *sed militares omnes horrendo fragore scuta genibus illidentes* (15.8.15); *stridore dentium infrendentes, ardoremque pugnandi hastis illidendo scuta monstrantes, in hostem se duci iam conspicuum exorabant* (16.12.13); *vocibus festis in laudes imperatoris assurgens deumque ex usu testate non posse Constantium vinci* (17.13.34); *hastis feriendo clipeos sonitu assurgens ingenti uno prope modu ore dictis favebat et coeptis* (20.5.8); *voces horrendas immani scutorum fragore miscebat, magnum elatumque ducem, et (ut experta est) fortunatum domitorem gentium appellans et regum* (21.5.9); *hastasque vibrantes scutis nihil periculosum fore vel arduum clamitabat sub imperatore plus sibi laboris quam gregariis indicente* (21.13.16); *sublatis altius scutis nihil periculosum fore vel arduum clamitabat sub imperatore plus sibi laboris quam gregariis indicente* (23.5.24); *quod, cum vere atque exanimo dicitur, solet armorum crepitu leni monstrari* (24.3.8).

Therefore, in order to understand the real significance of the general's speech in the *RG*, we should not limit our analysis to the content of the address itself. Other elements describing both the setting and circumstances in which these speeches were delivered clearly suggest that the meaning of these addresses lies in certain patterns of ritualized actions easily recognized by a contemporary audience. As I argued above, there are certain ritualistic commonplaces that are easy to identify: sound of brass instruments, procession of emperor and his attendants, description of the speaking platform, mention of the mental and physical deportment of the orator, and description of the reaction of the audience. Ammianus has thus successfully emphasized the role of ceremony as an essential aspect in the social and political life of the fourth century in his composition of speeches.[54]

2.1.2. The Ambassador's Speech.

Menander Rhetor dedicates a short section to the composition of this oration in his handbook on epideictic oratory. There, he discusses the situation in which an ambassador asks for compassion for a city in trouble, advising the use of some literary topics like the appeal to the emperor's humanity, or the commonplace of the capriciousness of fortune.[55] The ambassadorial orations often contained epideictic features, especially if they were delivered on the occasion of a congratulatory embassy. Kennedy argues that these speeches were learnt by imitation from literary models. He

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[54] MacMullen.has shown how ceremonial features in the life of the fourth century are depicted in the Roman digressions (14.6.1-26; 28.4.1-35). See "Some Pictures in Ammianus Marcellinus," 435-55. For an exhaustive study on the relationship between ceremonial life and panegyrics, see Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). I am indebted to these two works for my analysis of the general's speeches.

[55] *Menander Rhetor* 2.423-4 (ed. and trans. Russell and Wilson).

also suggests that compilations of this type of composition were circulating from the Hellenistic period on. Thus, a selection of such speeches was anthologized in a collection edited in the tenth century.[56]

Ammianus may have been inspired by this type of rhetoric as he reports how Julian sent envoys carrying a conciliatory letter to the emperor Constantius in 360. The letter is a masterpiece of political diplomacy (20.8.5-17). Julian, who had been recently proclaimed Augustus by his troops in Paris, presents his acclamation as an involuntary act for his part. He then gives sound advice about foreign policy, and argues that examples from the past show that a common rule can be successful: "Indeed, it is clear from the example of our forefathers that rulers who had these and similar designs were able somehow to find a way of living happily and successfully and of living to posterity and to all future time a happy memory of their lives" (20.8.17).

In a broader context, this type of speech played a significant role in the political diplomacy of the fourth century. For instance, in 357, the senate of Constantinople chose the orator Themistius to go to Rome and congratulate Constantius on his military success. The orator observes that whereas Camillus was the second founder of Rome, Constantius could be considered a founder superior to Romulus.[57]

2.2. Epideictic Oratory.

Kennedy minimizes the role played by schools of rhetoric in the teaching of epideictic oratory: "Instruction in the form of epideictic oratory was not a major feature

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[56] *Excerpta de Legationibus*. Ed. C. de Boor. Berlin. 1903. Cf. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*, 21.

[57] Themistius *Orationes* 3.43c-d (ed. and trans. Schenkl, Downey, and Norman). See Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, 101-3.

of the work in schools of rhetoric, but some provision for it was made."[58] Kennedy bases his argument on the brief treatment of epideictic speeches found in *progymnasmata*, on the fact that Menander Rhetor's work represents an unusual and isolated case, and, finally, on the assumption that epideictic oratory was mainly learned by imitation. For instance, Libanius, an orator and a teacher, presumably delivered many of his speeches before his students. Kennedy's argument raises important questions about how the structure of the curriculum could meet new political and social demands. We must not forget that access to a rhetorical education was reserved to a privileged elite seeking to consolidate and advance their social position. A well-written panegyric delivered on an official occasion offered great opportunities for social and political advancement, as the career of the Gallic Ausonius clearly reveals.[59] Therefore, it is very likely that fourth-century rhetors emphasized the teaching of epideictic oratory to meet the new expectations. Menander's treatise perfectly exemplifies this pragmatic attitude.

In a strict rhetorical sense, epideictic oratory is defined as the oratory of praise and blame.[60] This branch of oratory would experience a particular development within the political environment of Late Antiquity. The consolidation of imperial absolutism caused not only the decline of deliberative oratory but also the birth of a new literary genre rooted in the epideictic tradition: the Latin panegyric. Pliny's eulogy of Trajan is the earliest extant example of Latin panegyric in prose, and it greatly influenced the panegyrical literature of the fourth century. However, the absence of real political debate did not prevent the panegyrics from becoming a crucial device in announcing the political

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[58] Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*, 25-26.
[59] For an account of Ausonius' education and political career see Hagith Sivan, *Ausonius of Bordeaux: Genesis of a Gallic Aristocracy* (London: Routledge, 1993).
[60] Aristotle *Rhetorica* 1.3.3 (ed. and trans. Freese). See *Menander Rhetor* 1.331.15 (ed. and trans. Russell and Wilson): "Epideictic speeches, then, fall under the two headings of praise and blame."

programme of the emperor and establishing a bridge of communication between the ruler and his subjects. Vanderspoel convincingly argues that Themistius exemplifies a type of panegyrical oratory occupied in reminding emperors and the civil administration of the need to rule according to the principles of *paideia*.[61] As Rees shows, in the fourth century the physical presence of emperors throughout the provinces was a dynamic characteristic of imperial patronage. Rees notes that this imperial *praesentia*, which was made possible by journeys and the ceremonial of *adventus*, was greatly enhanced by the delivery of panegyrics, the best mechanism to initiate the official mechanism of petition and response.[62] Given the political and social relevance of panegyrics, it is important to inquire whether this rhetorical form played a role in Ammianus' historical representation. In this section, I intend to evaluate the historian's attitude towards the genre of panegyric, identifying passages in the *RG* where Ammianus echoes the language, physical setting, and intention of epideictic oratory of the fourth century.

16.1.3 is perhaps the most significant methodological statement in the *RG*. It is the preface to books 16 to 25, which chiefly deal with Julian's deeds: "Now whatever I shall tell (and no wordy deceit adorns my tale, but untrammeled faithfulness to fact, based upon clear proofs, composes it) will almost belong to the domain of the panegyric."[63] Sabbah has seen this declaration as a clear criticism of the genre of panegyric. Ammianus is here contrasting the expression *integra fides rerum*[64] with *falsitas arguta*. Sabbah argues that *rerum* signifies *gesta*, *arguta* being an epithet

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[61] Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, 13.
[62] Roger Rees, *Layers of Loyalty: Latin Panegyric, A.D. 289-307* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1-26.
[63] *Quicquid autem narrabitur, quod non falsitas arguta concinnat, sed fides integra rerum absolvit, documentis evidentibus fulta, ad laudativam paene materiam pertinebit.*
[64] In 31.5.10 Ammianus again uses the expression *integra fida* referring to historical truth.

generally applied to the genre of panegyric to emphasize its crafty style.[65] Within this context Sabbah does not explain, however, why Ammianus would anticipate the usage of an encomiastic style (*ad laudativam materiam*) to depict Julian's deeds. It seems clear to me that 16.1.3 actually needs to be linked to a previous methodological statement, wherein Ammianus declares that he should now write with a more polished style: *pro virium capto limatius* (15.1.1). The historian is simply acknowledging the role of rhetoric in the historical genre. Moreover, the use of an embellished language seems to be the logical choice for what he is attempting to accomplish in the next pages: the eulogy of the emperor Julian and the city of Rome. The praise of the pagan emperor is perfectly summarized in the obituary (25.4.1-27), in which the historian confers on Julian the four cardinal virtues of the ideal emperor. Ammianus' criticisms are restricted to Julian's attitude towards the curial class as well as to Julian's religious policy.[66] Concerning Rome, the historian's usual expression is *urbs aeterna*.[67] This concept originally appears in the first reference to the city in the extant text: the prefecture of Rome of Memmius Vitrasius Orfitus in 353-6; in this passage (14.6.3-6), which immediately precedes the

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[65] *Arguta* can mean *catus*, *prudens*, *callidus*, *subtilis*, and *ingeniosus*. *TLL*. 557-8. (Hey). Ammianus refers here to *callidus* (crafty) as it also appears in other authors. See Cicero *De Oratore* 2.66.268 (ed. and trans. Sutton and Rackham); Tacitus *Dialogus de oratoribus* 20 (ed. and trans. Peterson); See specially Cicero *Brutus* 11.42 (ed. and trans. Hendrickson): "*concessum est rhetoribus ementiri in historiis, ut aliquod dicere possint argutius.*." See Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, 21.

[66] Admittedly, panegyric is not the only literary genre involved in the narrative of Julian's deeds. In his careful examination of the narrative techniques employed in the description of Julian's Persian expedition, R. Smith emphasizes the presence of other literary elements painting a gloomier picture, particularly when using the epic mode. While Ammianus positively echoes the *Aeneid* to begin his account of Julian's campaigns in the West (Vergil *Aeneid* 7.44 (ed. and trans. Fairclough)), the historian also reflects the tragic side of the epic genre as the *Aeneid* is evoked to illustrate Julian's order to burn the Roman supply and transport fleet on the Euphrates (24.7.4): Bellona herself had lit the fatal torch (Vergil *Aeneid* 7.319 ff (ed. and trans. Fairclough)). Smith argues that the fact that Ammianus clearly endorses the soldiers' complaints against Julian's decision should be seen as part of a broader criticism that is clearly summarized in a section of the obituary. See Rowland Smith, "Telling Tales: Ammianus' Narrative of the Persian Expedition of Julian," in *The Late Roman World and Its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, ed. Jan Willem Drijvers and David Hunt (London: Routledge, 1999), 89-104.

[67] See Matthews, "Ammianus and the Eternity of Rome," 17-29.

first satire of the Roman aristocracy, Rome becomes an eternal entity that will live and conquer as long as there are men. This happy state of affairs is due to a pact struck between two eternal enemies: Virtue and Fortune.[68] Again, in the account of the arrival of Constantius II in Rome in 357, Ammianus praises the city, describing it as "the home of empire and every virtue", and reporting the emperor's admiration for the monuments of Rome. The double temple of Venus and Rome, the Forum of Peace, the theatre of Pompey, the *Odeum*, the Stadium, and the Forum of Trajan, are among the ancient sites the emperor Constantius admires during his visit (16.10.14-5). Rome is also the place where Ammianus' hero, Julian, should have been buried: "...but to perpetuate the glory of his noble deeds they should be laved by the Tiber, which cuts through the eternal city and flows by the memorial of the heroes of old" (25.10.5). Indeed, Ammianus closely follows the literary conventions contained in the panegyrics of cities. Other contemporary authors make use of a similar rhetorical approach. In the *De Consulatu Stilichonis III*, Claudian depicts the city of Rome in panegyrical terms:

> Consul, all but peer of the gods, protector of a city greater than any upon earth the air encompasseth, whose amplitude no eye can measure, whose beauty no imagination can picture, whose praise no voice can sound, who raises a golden head amid the neighboring stars...[69]

Similarly, Olympiodorus of Thebes, who writes in the first years of the fifth century, enthusiastically describes the public monuments and houses of Rome to his oriental

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[68] Apart from the panegyrical content of this passage, it seems that the historian actually believed that the Roman Empire would never end. Thus, despite the continuous threats on both the eastern and western frontiers, the historian sees the present danger as a repetition of a past crisis from which the Roman people will be victorious: "Those who are unacquainted with ancient records say that the state was never before overspread by such a dark cloud of misfortune, but they are deceived by the horror of the recent ills which have overwhelmed them" (31.5.11).

[69] Claudian *De consulato Stilichonis III* 130 ff (ed. and trans. Platnauer). See Cameron, *Claudian*, 352-54.

public.[70] Consequently, it can be argued that these encomiastic descriptions of Rome were a literary commonplace in the fourth century and that, moreover, they transmit an anachronistic image of the eternal city: Rome, a city that had already lost her political relevance in Diocletian's day, is turned into a nostalgic reflection of a glorious past as well as a cultural curiosity.[71]

Aside from the stylistic potential contained in the panegyrical genre, Ammianus also saw its relevance as a historical source. The fact that the two methodological declarations (15.1.1; 16.1.1) mention the truthfulness of the historical account does not necessarily imply an overt attack on the panegyric. Ammianus himself may have been inspired by Mamertinus' panegyric on Julian. The allusion to the flight of Triptolemus to illustrate a leg of Julian's journey to Constantinople (22.2.3),[72] the subtle reference to the legendary Palladium falling from heaven,[73] or the use of the hyperbolic expression *sidus salutare* (21.10.2; 22.9.14),[74] are all motifs probably derived from Mamertinus' literary imagery.[75] Indeed, panegyrics could become a source for historians. Pacatus declared that his eulogy of Theodosius would provide material for historians and artists.[76] It is

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[70] Olympiodorus of Thebes *History* Fr. 43 (ed. and trans. Blockley). Matthews argues that Olympiodorus' description is a "set-piece" of rhetorical composition whose rules were established by Menander Rhetor. See *Western Aristocracies*, 384-86.

[71] Javier Arce argues that the *Curiosum* and the *Notitia Urbis Romae*, two lists of the monuments of Rome enumerated within the 14 Augustan *regiones*, belong to a panegyrical tradition depicting the city as an idealized entity. Arce proves that these two works, which were privately circulated, cannot be classified as 'αναγραφαί: detailed information about houses and monuments for fiscal purposes. See "El inventario de Roma: *Curiosum* y *Notitia*," in *The Transformations of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity*, ed. William V. Harris and Javier Arce (Portsmouth, R.I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999).

[72] Mamertinus 11.8.1-4 (trans. Rodgers)

[73] Ibid., 11.6.3-4.

[74] Ibid., 11.2.3-4.

[75] See H. Gärtner, "Einige Überlegungen zur kaiserzeitlichen Panegyrik und zu Ammians Charakteristik des Kaisers Julian," *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz* 10 (1968): 3-33.

[76] Pacatus 12.44.5 (trans. Nixon). Pacatus' panegyric was particularly suitable to become a historical source. The topic of the central part of the work, the war against Maximus, was narrated within a chronological and geographical framework.

indeed perfectly conceivable that a particular encomiastic speech could have provoked such a literary impact that subsequent writers echoed some of its aesthetic and ideological features.

Ammianus' attitude towards panegyric should therefore be described as ambivalent. He clearly admires its embellished language and its epideictic features. However he also recognizes the potential danger of a rhetorical style: "and no wordy deceit adorns my tale, but untrammeled faithfulness to fact" (*quod non falsitas arguta concinnat, sed fides integra rerum absolvit*) (16.1.3). Similarly, Augustine, when he was rhetor at Milan, was called upon to deliver an imperial panegyric. He confesses that his intention was to include many lies that would be applauded by an audience that accepted them as such.[77] Nevertheless, in a particular passage of the *De Civitate Dei*,[78] shows MacCormack, Augustine depicts Theodosius by evoking Paulinus' panegyric and the *Consolatio* of Ambrose.[79] Ammianus uses a positive expression to define this genre: *stylus maior*.[80] In his epilogue, a rhetorical declaration of humility, he encourages future authors, more capable than himself, to continue his work in the grand style (31.16.9).[81] By indicating the chronological limit of his work, the death of Valens, it is likely that Ammianus here refers to the contemporaneity of panegyrics: events after the death of Valens are too close to Ammianus' time of composition to become a subject of history. The historian would be suggesting that a method of composition whereby a laudatory speech, which has been inspired by a political or ceremonial occasion, may eventually

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[77] Augustine *Confessions* 6.6 (ed. and trans. Watts).
[78] Augustine *De civitate dei* 5. 26 (ed. and trans. McCracken, Wiesen, *et alii*)..
[79] Sabine MacCormack, "Latin Prose Panegyrics: Tradition and Discontinuity in the Later Roman Empire," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 22 (1976): 66.
[80] Ibid., 40.
[81] See Appendix 3.

have its role in the historical discourse. Eutropius, an author that Ammianus may have read,[82] ends his historical breviary in similar terms.[83]

Having examined Ammianus' general attitude towards the panegyrical genre, I now attempt to identify a series of passages in the *RG* where the historian employs features of epideictic oratory. I will articulate my analysis within a general categorization that identifies two main functions of epideictic oratory in Late Antiquity: ceremonial and ideological.

2.2.1. Ceremonial Function of Epideictic Oratory

Epideictic speeches played an important role on official occasions such as victories, birthdays, and deaths of rulers. They were also delivered at festivals to honor a pagan or Christian holiday. Himerius' speeches reveal that this sort of oratory was also employed on private occasions such as birthdays or the arrival or departure of a friend.

Ammianus' account of Constantius' arrival in Rome offers an interesting insight into the ceremonial function of epideictic oratory in the *RG*.[84] On 28 April 357 the

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[82] Ammianus certainly knew Eutropius, an educated Gaul who joined Julian in the West and accompanied him in the Persian campaign: *Breviarium ab urbe condita* 10.16.1 ed. Santini). The fact that Ammianus does not refer to Eutropius' work means little since explicit acknowledgment was not a common practice among ancient authors. Ammianus, however, mentions Eutropius, describing his escape as a proconsul of Asia during the treason trials at Antioch and other eastern cities in 371: 29, 1, 36. Ammianus is clearly echoing the rhetorical formula used by Eutropius. Matthews, however, argues that the historian is merely employing a common literary convention in Greek historiography whereby a historian invites other writers to continue his work. Though it is unlikely that Ammianus' closing words are meant to be a literary compliment to Eutropius, as Matthews argues, it is undeniable that both epilogues shares the same conception regarding the role of panegyrics in contemporary history. Moreover, the linguistic parallels are remarkable. See *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 455, n. 4.

[83] Eutropius *Breviarium ab urbe condita* 10.18 (ed. Santini): *quia autem ad inclitos principes venerandosque perventum est, interim operi modum dabimus; nam reliqua stilo maiore dicenda sunt. Quae nunc non tamen praetermittimus quam ad maiorem scribendi diligentiam reservamus.*

[84] For the ceremonial and political significance of Constantius' *adventus*, see L. Valensi. "Quelques réflexions sur le pouvoir impérial d'après Ammien Marcellin," *Bulletin de l'Association G. Budé* 4, no. 4 (1957): 62-107; MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, 39-45; Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 231-38; Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, 101-3.

emperor Constantius officially visited Rome. The emperor arrived in the city enthroned in a golden carriage, "in the resplendent blaze of various precious stones, whose mingled glitter seemed to form a sort of second daylight" (16.10.6). On each side he was preceded by emblazoned standards, the imperial banners depicting dragons "woven out of purple thread and bound to the golden and jeweled tops of spears, with wide mouths open to the breeze and hence hissing as if roused with anger, and leaving their tails winding in the wind" (10.7). On either side the emperor was escorted by infantrymen "with shields and crests gleaming with glittering light, clad in shining mail" (10.8). Amid these soldiers were the cavalry, "all masked, furnished with protecting breastplates and girt with iron belts, so that you might have supposed them statues polished by the hand of Praxiteles, not men"(10.8). Probably, one of the passages most commented upon, is the description of the emperor's statue-like stance:

> Accordingly, being saluted as Augustus with favoring shouts, while hills and shores thundered out the roar, he never stirred, but showed himself as calm and imperturbable as he was commonly seen in the provinces. For he both stooped when passing through lofty gates (although he was very short), and as if his neck were in a vise, he kept the gaze of his eyes straight ahead, and turned his face neither to right nor to left, but (as if he were a lay figure) neither did he nod when the wheel jolted nor was he ever seen to spit, or to wipe or rub his face or nose, or move his hands about (10.9-10).[85]

After Constantius' acclamation by the people of Rome, the emperor abandoned his detached stance to play the role of a Roman citizen. He addressed the nobles in the senate

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[85] MacCormack argues that the atmosphere of remoteness and dignity conveyed in Ammianus' narrative is also rendered on a *largitio* dish of Constantius II in the Hermitage. See *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, 43. For Ammianus' accurate representation of aspect of ceremonial life in Late Antiquity, see MacMullen, "Some Pictures in Ammianus Marcellinus," 435-55.

and the people from the tribunal; and in the circus, and while admiring the monuments of the city, he perfectly integrated into the community.

The ceremonial description of an imperial *adventus* was a section that was present in numerous panegyrics of the age. In his panegyric *On the Sixth Consulship of Honorius*, the poet Claudian recalls the acclamation of the people,[86] and as we have seen above, in his *On Stilicho's Consulship III* he inserts the praise of Roman antiquities.[87] Pacatus, in his panegyric on the emperor Theodosius, employs the description of the ritualistic *adventus* to highlight certain moments in the career of the emperor. He narrates how the people from Haemona acclaimed Theodosius, symbolically anticipating his triumph against Maximus.[88] The *adventus* to Rome then becomes the real celebration of the victory,[89] and Pacatus ends the speech recalling again his own experience of seeing the emperor at Rome.[90] The ceremonial transformation of the absolute emperor into a Roman citizen is part of the protocol of the *adventus*, signifying through this transformation its conclusion. For instance, Pacatus describes how Theodosius dismissed his military escort and entered the senate house, fully adopting the modes of civil conduct.[91] In art, the *adlocutio* and *largitio* panels on the arch of Constantine display the end of the arrival ceremony with the emperor surrounded by people, and already integrated with the community.

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[86] Claudian *Panegyricus de sexto consulato Honorii Augusti* 612-7 (ed. and trans. Dewar).
[87] Claudian 132 ff (ed. and trans. Platnauer).
[88] Pacatus 12.37.3 (trans. Nixon).
[89] Ibid.,12.47.3-4.(trans. Nixon).
[90] Ibid., 12.47.5. (trans. Nixon).
[91] Ibid., 12.47.3 (trans. Nixon): "But what took place in Rome; the impression you made on the day you first entered the city; how you behaved in the Senate house and on the rostra; now in a chariot, now on foot, distinguished in either mode of progress, triumphant now in war, now over pride; how you showed to all as a ruler, to individuals as a senator; how in your frequent and unpretentious public appearances you not only visited public buildings, but hallowed with your divine footsteps private dwellings as well,..."

Consequently, it is clear that for the account of Constantius'visit at Rome, Ammianus borrowed from a rich panegyrical tradition dealing with the ceremony of *adventus*. Additionally, this rhetorical framework also emphasized the role of ceremony as an essential component of life in the fourth century.

2.2.2. Ideological Function of Epideictic Oratory

The fact that Ammianus fails to provide an explicit explanation of the religious and ideological controversies of the fourth century, seems to have disappointed many scholars.[92] Certainly, the historian is reluctant to deal with the theological debates of the age. In a section of Constantius' obituary, he openly criticizes the deceased emperor for his efforts to unify the Church with the Arian creed:

> The plain and simple religion of the Christians (*Christiana religio absoluta*) he obscured by a dotard's superstition (*superstitio*), and by subtle and involved discussions about dogma (*scrutari perplexius*), rather than by seriously trying to make them agree, he aroused many controversies; and as these spread more and more, he fed them with contentious words. And since throngs of bishops hastened hither and thither on the public post-horses to the various synods, as they call them, while he sought to make the whole ritual conform to his own will, he cut the sinews of the courier-service (21.16.18).

Indeed, Ammianus clearly detached himself from religious controversies. He criticized Julian's animosity towards Christians as well as the emperor's program of pagan restoration. Within this restoration, Julian had reserved a special part for the philosophers who, according to Ammianus, would ultimately usurp the role traditionally assigned to

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[92] This is the chief reason why scholars do not agree on Ammianus' real position on Christianity. For a good overview on the bibliography of this subject, see Hunt, "Christians and Christianity," 187-88; Rike, *Apex Omnium*, 1-5.

priests and augurs in Roman religion. As Rike indicates, the historian would have supported a programme of continuity with the past, rescuing one of the main aspects defining paganism: tolerance.[93] One more factor may have prevented Ammianus from dealing with theological subjects. Historians of Late Antiquity are characterized by their linguistic conservatism, as evident in their reluctance to employ the new vocabulary of the Church. Alan and Averil Cameron argue that the exclusion of ecclesiastical affairs in pagan historians like Aurelius Victor, Festus and Eutropius, and even in Christian Byzantine writers, is due to the classicizing tendency of these authors.[94]

Nevertheless, Ammianus' distaste for religious debates does not mean that he ignored the theological significance of these controversies. In fact, it is possible to perceive a subtle indication of the ideological impact of the epideictic rhetoric. V. Neri convincingly argues that the historian fully knew the theological connotation of the expression *absoluta et simplex religio*. The historian, argues Neri, was familiar with the religious terminology in orthodox Christian circles, which thought that the clear and simple truth should be sought through piety. Conversely, the heterodox view would be represented by Constantius' thirst for scholarly investigation (*scrutari perplexius*). The fact that the historian clearly disapproves of Constantius' approach to faith would have found a positive response from a Christian audience in the Theodosian era. Similarly,

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[93] See Rike, *Apex Omnium*. For a close examination of the significance of paganism as a tolerant religious approach, see J. J. O'Donnell, "The Demise of Paganism," *Traditio* 35 (1979): 45-88. For an analysis of how Ammianus' treatment of pagan religion has further implications in the historical interpretation of the *RG*, including the fate of emperors and the Empire in general, see Harrison, *"Templum Mundi Totius,"* 178-90.

[94] See Cameron and Cameron, "Christianity and Tradition."

concludes Neri, a pagan reader would have understood Ammianus' argument in terms of the opposition between *religio* and *superstitio*.[95]

A quick examination of the ideological debate of the age strongly suggests that Ammianus deliberately avoided direct discussion of theological issues for stylistic reasons. The historian could not have been unaware of these debates. Indeed, contemporary authors made ample use of the ideological function of epideictic oratory. Libanius used this type of oratory to defend the heritage of Hellenism. Likewise, epideictic techniques were widely used by Themistius to introduce his interpretation of Platonic and Aristotelian views in many of his political speeches. Within this ideological context, we must also refer to the role of epistolography. This literary genre was often undistinguishable from the speeches themselves, since there are numerous occasions when we do not know whether an oration was publicly delivered, sent privately or published for a wider public. We may again choose an example from Julian's oratory. One of his most famous letters is probably the official rescript whereby he forbade Christians to teach pagan literature, thus excluding them from positions in state-supported schools.[96] We could probably describe much of Gregory of Nazianzus' oratory as an implicit reaction against the arguments presented in Julian's letter. The emperor's attack somehow reinforced in Christian authors the need to use the Greek cultural background for their theological pursuits. Gregory of Nazianzus' funeral speeches offer a good example of a fusion of Hellenic culture and Christian values.

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[95] See V. Neri, "Ammianus' Definition of Christianity as *absoluta et simplex religio*," in *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus*, ed. J. den Boeft, Daniël den Hengst and H. C. Teitler (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1992), 59-65.

[96] Julian *Epistulae* 36 (ed. and trans. Wright).

2.3. Judicial Speeches.

There is one single instance of a judicial speech in the *RG*: Julian's last words on his deathbed (25.3.15-20). This particular oration is a clear example of what Kennedy describes as the *letteraturizzazione* of practical rhetoric.[97] In other words, a particular form of oratory is used as a source of techniques for literary composition. For instance, Plato's *Apology* is to a certain extent a literary version of a forensic speech, which became a model to imitate at schools of rhetoric. Isocrates' personal apology, *Antidosis*, was partly inspired by Plato's work and had a great impact on orators of Late Antiquity. Likewise, Libanius' autobiography can be interpreted as an apology for his career. Particularly interesting is oration 14, a defense of Aristophanes of Corinth that Libanius sent to Julian. The speech is also a panegyric of both Aristophanes and the emperor, in which the orator defends the unity of Hellenism.

Through Julian's last speech Ammianus places the emperor within the literary tradition of stoic heroism and political apology. Tacitus' account of the death of the senator Thrasea[98] and Plato's *Apology* were the historian's sources of inspiration. The speech itself has a philosophical component dominated by Stoic ideas on death, and the importance of the soul over the body. Julian calmly sees death as a liberation (*summum praemium*), as a gift (*munus*) ultimately given by the eternal power (*sempiternum numen*). The moral element pervades the speech. Julian says that he conducted his civil and foreign policy with moderation, forethought, and guided by a stainless soul (*animum immaculatum*). The dying emperor therefore presents himself as an emperor-philosopher who always tried to govern moderately for the sake of his subjects.

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[97] Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*, 18.
[98] Tacitus *Annales* 16.34 (ed. and trans. Jackson).

In an examination of Julian's speech and of the circumstances in which it was delivered, Geffcken concludes that Ammianus links the death of his hero with that of Socrates.[99] Indeed, there are striking similarities between the historian's account and Plato's representation in *Phaedo*.[100] Socrates speaks with his friends about the immortality of the soul, and Julian speaks with two philosophers, Maximus and Priscus, *super animorum sublimitate* (25.3.23). As Socrates drinks the poison, his friends burst into tears, being then admonished by him. Likewise, the dying emperor criticizes those who are present for not being able to hold their tears: *Et fluentes inter haec omnes qui aderant, auctoritate integra etiam tum increpabat,* ...(25.3.22). Socrates' friends obey the philosopher's advice to keep silence: "... for I have heard that it is best to die in silence. Keep quiet and be brave". Similarly, the exhortation of Julian has an effect on those close to him: *Quibus ideo iam silentibus*...(25.3.23). Furthermore, Julian dies shortly after he drinks a draught of cold water, a circumstance that an attentive reader could easily link with Socrates' hemlock. The speech itself is a reminiscence of Socrates' words spoken in prison. In the conclusion of *Crito*,[101] Socrates demands unconditional obedience to the law. As one willingly accepts the father's decision, one must also carry out whatever the state or fatherland commands. Socrates' stance is to a certain extent echoed in Julian's serene acceptance of death: *...gaudensque abeo, sciens quod ubicumque me velut imperiosa parens consideratis periculis obiecit res publica, steti fundatus,* ...(25.3.18). When at the end of the oration the emperor calls himself *alumnus rei publicae frugi* (25.3.20), he may be evoking Plato's image of the state and laws caring for each citizen

[99] Johannes Geffcken, *Kaiser Julianus* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1914), 168 ff. Cf. G. Scheda, "Die Todesstunde Kaiser Julians," *Historia* 15 (1966): 380-83. For the examination of the parallelisms between Plato's works and Julian's speech, I am greatly indebted to these two works.
[100] Plato *Phaedo* 117d-e (ed. and trans. Fowler).
[101] Plato *Crito* 51b-c (ed. and trans. Fowler).

as if they were their offspring: "Well then, when you were born and nurtured and educated, could you say to begin with that you were not our offspring and our slave, you yourself and your ancestors?"[102]

Other ancient historians used the account of Socrates' death as a rhetorical device. As I pointed out above, Tacitus describes the death of the stoic senator Paetus Thrasea in similar terms.[103] In his last hour, Thrasea converses with the cynic philosopher Demetrius. The topic is about the immortality of the soul: *de natura animae et dissociatione spiritus corporisque*. Tacitus also introduces the scene of those bursting into tears and lamentation at the news of the senator's decision: *igitur flentes queritantesque, qui aderant...hortatur.* Therefore, we must assume the existence of a literary tradition in which men of character and intellect would discuss philosophical matters during their last moments. Indeed, when Tacitus describes Petronius' suicide, the historian emphasizes the fact that the Roman senator does not deal with serious subjects like the immortality of the soul, but merely recites light poetry.[104]

Consequently, Julian's speech is the result of Ammianus' adaptation of this literary tradition. That Julian may have chosen to evoke particular passages from two Platonic dialogues in his last hour is an attractive hypothesis that would effectively match the emperor's character and educational background.[105] However, even if we consider the possibility that Ammianus himself witnessed the death of Julian, Julian's speech fits too

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[102] Plato *Crito* 50e (ed. and trans. Fowler).
[103] Tacitus *Annales* 16, 34 (ed. and trans. Jackson).
[104] Ibid., *Annales*. 16.19 (ed. and trans. Jackson).
[105] Jacques Fontaine argues that the historian perfectly evoked what the emperor may have said in that particular occasion. "'Mithopoete' de son propre destin, nourri de platonisme ancien aussi bien que nouveau, Julien fut assurément le premier à être obsédé par le souvenir de Socrate en cette heure dernière." Fontaine examines the speech from the perspective of the ancient historiographical method, which is often concerned with "truth" as the author would like to see transmitted. See "Le Julien d'Ammien Marcellin," in *L'empereur Julien: De l'histoire à la légende (331-1715),* ed. René Braun and Jean Richer (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1978), 51-53.

well into the conventions of this type of oratory. In his *Epitaphios* to Julian, Libanius explicitly links Julian with Socrates.[106] It is chronologically possible that the historian may have been inspired by Libanius' account. The orator published the speech only a few years after Julian's death. However, it is even more likely that both Libanius and Ammianus merely applied their literary skills to participate in an ideological reaction beginning after Julian's death, which focused on perpetuating a favorable image of the pagan emperor. The literary use of Socrates's death did not imply an anti-Christian message. While Tertullian and Lanctantius strongly criticized the figure of Socrates, by the fourth century pagans and Christians shared their admiration for the philosopher.[107] We should not forget that Julian's religious policy could be chiefly defined as a reaction against what he saw as the Christians' appropriation of the Hellenic heritage.[108] Consequently, we should think of the speech as an apology designed to justify Julian's policy as well as to protect the memory of the emperor from Christian criticism.

Initially, it seems odd that Ammianus did not include other instances of judicial oratory, considering that there is frequent mention of judicial cases. Particularly, the

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[106] Libanius *Orationes* 18.272 (ed. Foerster).

[107] See Johannes Geffcken, *Sokrates und das alte Christentum* (Heidelberg: C. Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1908), 31. For instance, in a letter to Philagrius, Gregory of Nazianzus digresses about the relevance of various Greek philosophers (Anaxarchus, Epictetus, and Socrates) comparing their heroism in life with that of the Christian martyrs: *Epistulae* 32 (Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus, series Graeca* 37.21-388).

[108] Christian apologetic authors rarely acknowledged their debt to Greek rhetoric and philosophy, although they inevitably adopted Greek rhetorical techniques and thought to articulate their theological and ethical ideas. In order to explain the obvious similarities between their own ideas and those from the Hellenic heritage, Christian authors echoed an interesting assumption from Jewish apologetics: Greek thinkers had taken their ideas from Moses. Gregory of Nazianzus is a good example of this ambivalent approach. He seldom has a positive word for Greek authors. Thus, in his speeches delivered in church, he echoes the official condemnation of pagan culture. In his letters, however, he shares with other Christian authors a more honest and objective attitude towards the influence of Greek rhetors and philosophers. R. R. Ruether put it nicely: "The orations, after all, were delivered in church, and thus represent more of the 'official' attitude on this subjects, while in the letters Gregory, Basil, and other Christian Fathers often reveal more genial attitudes towards classical studies in accordance with their own obvious interests in and pursuit of these subjects." See *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 172-73. See G. L. Kustas, "Saint Basil and the Rhetorical Traditon," in *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*, ed. Paul Jonathan Fedwick (Toronto: Pontifical Institue of Mediaeval Studies, 1981).

historian describes legal processes regarding treason and magic arts: *maiestas* and *maleficium*. The accounts of these cases follow a similar rhetorical pattern. Sycophants manipulate a piece of incidental information to convince the emperor that he is the victim of a conspiracy. Agents are sent to supervise the investigations. Numerous arrests are made in several provinces and men are enchained and confined. The victims are subject to cruel tortures that do not result in a confession. After the trials are concluded, a merciless emperor declares the severest sentences: execution or exile, with the confiscation of their property. There is no room for clemency, and the historian never gives any hint of a forensic speech being delivered. For example, it is worth referring to a process in which Ammianus may have been involved: the case against Theodorus heard at Antioch in 371.[109] A case of embezzlement is investigated by Fortunatianus, the *comes rei privatae*, who, probably suspecting that something more dangerous was taking place, finally transfers the case to the praetorian prefect (29.1.5). Under torture, one of the accused incriminates others in a conspiracy involving magic arts (29.1.6, 2.1 ff). After further investigation, a report is made to Valens, who sets out the law under which the cases are to be heard (29.1.10 ff). Theodorus, the apparent leader of the conspiracy, is charged with *maiestas*. He is brought to Antioch from Constantinople and held in a remote place until the day of the trial (29.1.14). During the trial itself, the judges state the law under which the accused are being charged (29.1.27), and the hearings start with the interrogation of witnesses. Evidence is taken, such as the actual tripod used in the

[109] "And, since I have seen many condemned after horrible tortures, but everything is a jumble of confusion as in times of darkness, I shall, since the complete recollection of what was done has escaped me, give a brief and summary account of what I can recall" (29 1.24); 'Indeed, at that time we all crept about as if in Cimmerian darkness,..." (29.2.4). Ammianus had also been a witness of the treason trials that were held under Gallus at Antioch in 354. Ursicinus, Ammianus' superior officer, had been summoned from Nisibis to preside the trials. The historian openly contrasts Ursicinus' honesty with the biased attitude of the judges (14.9.1).

meeting, at which Theodorus was predicted to be the new emperor (29.1.28). The only speech Ammianus reports is the statement of one of the defendants accurately describing the meeting and, at the end, exonerating Theodorus (29.1.29-33). When Theodorus is finally brought to the courtroom, he dramatically lies prostrate in a humble prayer pleading for mercy. The judges then urge him to address the point in question (29.1.34). It is somehow disappointing that Ammianus had not taken literary advantage of this particular occasion. He had often introduced fictitious speeches such as the one delivered by Julian on his deathbed. A well-elaborated apology delivered by Theodorus, a man praised for his liberal education, political honesty and oratorical skills,[110] could have fitted into the historiographical tradition of forensic speeches that address political issues such as the tyrannical policy of the emperor. Similarly, when Ursicinus is summoned to the court of Constantius to be blamed for the fall of Amida, the *magister militum* merely delivers a few arrogant sentences guaranteeing his forced retirement from public life. Again, the historian misses the opportunity to introduce a dramatic political apology by his admired general.[111]

Ammianus' decision not to incorporate more judicial speeches should be judged within the context of court proceedings in the fourth century. There is no doubt that instruction in forensic oratory was the core of a rhetorical education in Antiquity. The skills of composing a speech in defense or in prosecution would ultimately have an

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[110] "For he was born of an old and distinguished family in Gaul, liberally educated from earliest childhood, and so eminent for his modesty, good sense, refinement, charm, and learning that he always seemed superior to every office and rank that he was holding, and was dear alike to high and low. He was also almost the only man whose mouth was close by no fear of danger, since he bridled his tongue and reflected on what he was going to say" (28.1.8).

[111] Apologetical speeches by defeated generals who had been obliged to sign a *pax ignominiosa* were a commonplace in ancient historiography. For instance, Livy reports how the consul Spurnius Postumius, one of the generals who signed the peace treaty with the Samnites after the Roman defeat in the Caudine Forks in 321B.C., tries to convince the Senate of how his own humiliation (the Romans were forced to pass under the yoke) was the price to save the Roman army. See Livy *Ab urbe condita* 9.8.3-12 (ed. and trans. Foster).

application in a court of law. In Late Antiquity, however, the use of forensic rhetoric in court was rather limited.[112] This fact may have negatively affected the role of forensic oratory in the curriculum. A decline in the delivery of judicial speeches had already started in the first years of imperial absolutism. As Tacitus denounces in the *Dialogus*, the courts of law were no longer the forums for political debates. Furthermore, as I explained in the introduction, by fourth century the practice of law was highly professionalized to meet the high standards of legal theory and codification.[113] Therefore, a student at the law school in Rome or Beirut would focus on the technical knowledge of legal language rather than on rhetorical skills. For instance, Libanius openly criticizes the practice of law wherein the legal expert, who previously was a mere secretary, eclipses the orator.[114] In addition, the delivery of forensic speeches was limited by the increasing relevance of written documents in the legal proceedings. A written indictment had to be prepared and studied in court through the judge's questions to the lawyers of the litigants.

In consequence, the evidence discussed in both the introductory chapter and above suggests that court proceedings in Late Antiquity did not provide a favorable environment for the employment of judicial rhetoric. As a result, it is not surprising that no speeches delivered in a court of law have survived from that period.[115] Strict legal expertise and written evidence played a more decisive role. If the judge lacked legal knowledge, as was often the case, legal support would be provided by a *concilium* of

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[112] For a description of legal procedure in Late Antiquity see Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1, 470-522; Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity*, 99-110.

[113] For an examination of the rhetorical background and knowledge of technical language that were necessary for the composition of the law see Honoré, *Tribonian*. See also Harries, "The Roman Imperial Quaestor," 148-72.

[114] Libanius *Orationes* 2.44. (ed. and trans. Norman).

[115] As Kennedy describes, we can only rely on versions of some judicial speeches delivered in Late Antiquity. The accounts of these speeches can be found in the works of Eunapius, Zosimus, Synesius of Cyrene, John Lydus and Agathias. See *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*, 9-17.

lawyers. If Ammianus had made frequent use of rhetorical speeches in a judicial context, contemporary readers of the *RG* would have immediately detected this historical anachronism.

CONCLUSION

It is plain that Greek rhetorical treatises played an important role in the composition of the Roman digressions and the encomium of Julian. A careful examination of the sources of the Roman digressions reveals that Latin rhetorical theory must have also had a considerable influence. The content and structure of the Roman passages suggest that the author had a comprehensive knowledge of the rhetorical mechanism of the satirical genre.

The impact of the rhetorical education is also patent in the use of different types of oratory for both the speeches and particular passages in the *RG*. Ammianus inserts a number of short deliberative speeches that can be divided into two main sub-categories: the General's Speech and the Ambassador's Speech. Using the traditional literary form of the general addressing his troops, the historian makes imperial personages deliver a series of speeches. In these addresses, Ammianus is mainly interested in the visual and the ritualistic aspects that clearly resemble certain features of social and political engagements of the fourth century. Conversely, Ammianus completely fails to reflect the content of political debate of the age. As regards the Ambassador's Speech, Ammianus is inspired by this rhetorical form as he includes a conciliatory letter Julian sent to the emperor Constantius in 360. This type of rhetoric was commonly used in the political diplomacy of the fourth century.

Reminiscences of epideictic oratory are also present in the narrative of the *RG*. I have shown how, in the account describing Constantius visit to Rome in 357, Ammianus clearly echoes the ceremony of *adventus*. This event was not only a section of many contemporary panegyrics, but also had an actual political and social significance as a way in which itinerant emperors established a relationship with their subjects.

Regarding judicial oratory, I have examined Julian's speech on his deathbed. This emotional address is clearly a literary creation based on the speech of apology. Moreover, by comparing Julian with Socrates, this speech is an attempt to conciliate the historical figure of the pagan emperor with the intellectual expectations of a potential Christian audience. Furthermore, I have also analyzed why strictly judicial speeches are absent from the *RG*. I have argued that court proceedings in the fourth century reveal that rhetorical speeches might have been rare, considering the increasing codification of the Law and the relevance of a highly technical jargon. This situation was decisive in Ammianus' choice of not including actual forensic speeches.

CONCLUSION

We know about Ammianus' life and career more than about many other authors from antiquity. Our main source of biographical information is the historian's own work, the *RG*. However, this text provides us only with the account of the major events of his life. In this dissertation, I have carefully investigated the relevance of the cultural environment in the East, including the linguistic landscape and education, as a means to understand Ammianus' life experience in a broader perspective. This point of view allows us to comprehend better Ammianus as an author and, particularly, his decision to write a long history of the Roman Empire in Latin.

Although it has been previously stated that, like other Greek individuals in the fourth century, Ammianus saw the importance of Latin to advance in his military career, little attention has been paid to a new cultural milieu represented by numerous individuals who used Latin as a vehicle of culture. Indeed, it is not difficult to place the historian within this particular context. Contrary to the dramatic cultural polarity suggested in many of Libanius' letters and speeches, the example of Ammianus and other contemporaries clearly suggests that many easterners did not view their cultural identities as a tension between the Latin and Greek legacies. In this light, I have looked at the evidence for the existence of Latin instruction in the East, an extraordinary novelty considering the traditional prejudice of Greek intellectuals against Latin studies. That Ammianus probably did not make important social connections during his stay at Rome does not necessarily mean that he was culturally isolated. In many ways, he was a product of his age.

The fact that Ammianus composed an ambitious historical work in his second language inspired me to explore the role of education and rhetoric in the *RG*. The topic of ancient education is traditionally examined in the context of its own history, and most of the studies dealing with the impact of a rhetorical education upon literary works are focused either on poetry or on ancient historians such as Sallust, Livy and Tacitus. Admittedly, numerous historiographical monographs have generally examined the role of rhetoric in ancient history. As discussed in the introduction, I have used the methodological approach of some of these works to identify the ways in which Ammianus presents the *RG* as a traditional work of history written in an embellished style. More specifically, in studies on the *RG,* scholars have examined how rhetoric distorts the representation of historical reality, particularly by stylistic embellishment and the insertion of fictional speeches. In my dissertation, however, I have considered the concept of education as an intellectual experience that provides the necessary rhetorical mechanism to construct a literary style. This approach evidently goes beyond the traditional practice of historiography, which mainly emphasizes the conflict between historical reality and a fictional account heavily influenced by rhetorical convention. In a broader sense, I have also assessed the cultural significance of education in the fourth century. The intellectual debate about how the traditional curriculum can be compatible with the needs of the Christian faith is echoed in Ammianus' strong criticism of Julian's decree that forbade Christian professors to teach. The text of the *RG* reveals the historian's great interest in the traditional pagan religion. One may easily argue that Ammianus' attempts to explain the failure of the Persian campaign on religious grounds—Julian failed to follow the rituals of the traditional Roman religion—have

much in common with the general spirit of Christian historiography, in which religion plays such a central role. Furthermore, I have challenged the claim that the language of the *RG* shows that Ammianus was educated as a Christian. Whereas it is indeed possible that Ammianus was originally a Christian who eventually apostatized, the language of the *RG* does not betray any profound knowledge of Christian theology. Any educated pagan author would have been familiar with the basic vocabulary of a faith that had been becoming increasingly popular in the fourth century. In order to establish whether Ammianus could have been educated as a Christian, we need to refer again to the composition of the curriculum in the fourth century. As scholars have already asserted, despite some isolated efforts, Christian intellectuals did not manage to implement an exclusively Christian curriculum. Therefore, Ammianus' education could not have been very different from the mainstream schooling.

Concerning what I have called "the rhetorical mechanism to construct a literary style," the text of the *RG* demonstrates that Ammianus was aware of the ancient theory of styles as he explicitly dismisses the "realistic" approach of the biographic genre. Additionally, the historian skilfully exploits a type of ἐνάργεια that emphasizes the sections of a narrative description. Interestingly, this type of ἐνάργεια was increasingly popular in the fourth century. In applying these rhetorical devices, Ammianus shows awareness of the rhetorical principles as they were explained in Latin manuals of rhetoric. This influence reinforces my thesis that Ammianus received instruction in Latin.

Many scholars have merely assumed that Ammianus learnt his Latin in the army. After all, they claim, Latin was the official language among soldiers. Recent studies on bilingualism in the East, however, have seriously challenged this assumption. In fact,

fluency in Latin was not widely spread, particularly among the lower ranks. The fact that real proficiency in Latin was restricted to the highest ranks brings to light the importance of an early training in that language well before joining the army. Certainly, Ammianus became *protector domesticus* through family connections at a young age. Nevertheless, it is extremely plausible that knowledge of Latin was a decisive factor in this early appointment, particularly when we consider that some of the duties of this rank involved diplomacy and espionage.

Recent studies show that the literary style of the *RG* also reflects the impact of contemporary taste. For instance, the *RG* echoes the influence of the obscure language fourth-century rhetoricians were imposing on the composition of imperial decrees. As regards the structure of phrases, Ammianus employs techniques previously used by Latin historians such as Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus. Furthermore, what some scholars have viewed as odd grammatical constructions can be easily explained by the literary fashions of the period. Indeed, Fontaine and Roberts have examined Ammianus' work from a literary perspective, concluding that there are a number of stylistic characteristics in the *RG* that perfectly match the style of late antique Latin, particularly the language of poetry. In addition, an examination of the historian's borrowings from Greek and Latin authors reveals that he had a better knowledge of Latin literature, particularly writers like Cicero and Vergil, which were customarily included in bilingual manuals in the East. Consequently, the results of these studies clearly undermine previous assessments that overemphasized the impact of the Greek language on the *RG*. Inspired by the results of these studies, I have further argued that Ammianus' literary style is a reflection of his Latin education. Additionally, my examination of the impact of Latin writers on the *RG*

clearly reinforces my thesis that Ammianus undertook Latin studies before joining the army.

Although Ammianus shows a profound knowledge of Homer, his other references to Greek literature and philosophy are rather superficial. Conversely, the historian displays a comprehensive knowledge of Latin literature. In view of this clear disparity, I have argued that this type of borrowings may reflect two different stages in the historian's education. He consolidated his knowledge of Homer in the early stages of his instruction in the Greek language and grammar. Julian's early education suggests that this may not have been unusual. He acknowledged the influence of his tutor Mardonius in shaping his love for Greek literature, particularly Homer and Hesiod. Indeed, his acquaintance with these two authors had already started during his school years before beginning secondary education, or the school of the grammarian, at the age of 11.

Ammianus must have used anthologies and encyclopedic works in order to incorporate such a wide range of literary sources. More specifically, it is necessary to note the impact of Latin encyclopedic summaries such as those composed by Pliny and Aulus Gellius. The use of this material might have been common in the fourth century. For instance, A. F. Norman has convincingly argued that this type of works was an essential part of Libanius' library. Julian also read this sort of compilations. As I explained in the introductory chapter, he used 'folding tablets' in a codex format, which contained a selection of texts by Plato and Homer. It is surprising that scholars had not noticed the connection between the historian's literary sources and this intellectual tradition.

An examination of the curriculum has been extremely useful for understanding the role of the cultural digressions. These passages, which deal with ethnography, geography, and science, mirror the cultural prejudices and limitations of the education system in antiquity. My analysis shows that the digressions contain the shortcomings of a curriculum largely based on the study of grammar and rhetoric. Put another way, I have explored the role of education in shaping the cultural prejudices of the Romans. The fact that the curriculum was extremely poor in scientific subjects prevented the Romans from approaching the study of other peoples and regions with a more objective view.

Ammianus' composition of the so-called satirical digressions and the encomium of Julian plainly reflects the impact of rhetorical treatises. Regarding the Roman digressions, the historian shows familiarity not only with Greek manuals of the kind written by Menander Rhetor, but also with Latin rhetorical theory as described by Quintilian. More specifically, in the reversal of the rules to praise an individual or a city, Ammianus displays a synthesis of both instructional traditions.

The traditional division of oratory into three branches—deliberative, epideictic, and judicial—is reflected in Ammianus' techniques of composition. I have argued how the historian echoes this academic division in both the historical narrative and the speeches. Further, Ammianus' interpretation of each of these types of rhetoric matches the social and political demands of the fourth century. The historian's use of rhetoric recalls other oratorical manifestations that emphasize the ceremonial aspects of life, and the absence of judicial speeches clearly reflects the reality of the courtroom, where the high professionalization of the law prevented the delivery of long rhetorical speeches.

To summarize: the study of the impact of education and rhetoric on the *RG* greatly helps us understand the compositional techniques employed by Ammianus, ultimately indicating how, despite the sincere employment of autopsy and eyewitnesses, the historian often exaggerates a particular episode. Indeed, other scholars, such as Thompson, Rose, Blockley, Elliot, Sabbah, Matthews, and Barnes, have already noted how stylistic and ideological considerations may often distort the representation of historical reality. In general, this is one of the fundamental objectives of any historiographical study: the discrepancies between text and the way an episode actually happened is explained by the use of rhetoric, a device that greatly defines the nature of the historical genre. In my dissertation, however, I have gone beyond this traditional approach, focussing on how those rhetorical conventions used by Ammianus were created. The answer lies in the content of traditional curriculum, including preliminary exercises or *progymnasmata*, and Greek and Latin manuals of rhetoric. In general, the content of the curriculum remained stubbornly unchanged in the fourth century, even though Christian authors seriously questioned it. It can be affirmed that Ammianus was highly educated not only because he knew his sources, especially Latin writers, but also because he knew how to employ rhetorical devices in his narrative, such as ἐνάργεια and the different types of speeches. Albeit a soldier and a Greek, the historian may have been confident that his literary education as manifested in the *RG* would ensure him success at Rome. Both education and the use of rhetoric connect Ammianus with his readers. We should reject the image of a lonely historian desperately seeking patronage in the western capital, a portrait suggested by Momigliano and Cameron. Ammianus was a product of his age: he was an ambitious bilingual easterner who, like many of his contemporaries,

assimilated Roman culture and the ideal of Rome. While the historian echoed the rhetorical and ideological conventions of the past, strongly rooted in the literary principles taught in the curriculum, he also reflected the stylistic subtleties of fourth-century Latin as well as the rhetorical idiosyncrasies of the age, such as the omnipresent presence of ceremony.

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Appendix 1

The Origin of Ammianus

The claim that Ammianus was originally from Antioch is mainly based on a letter of the Antiochene orator Libanius addressed to a certain "Marcellinus."[1] However, Fornara argues that the recipient is a former student of Libanius who has just arrived in Rome to try his fortune as an orator. Fornara proposes that Ammianus came from Macedonia.[2] Bowersock argues that the recipient of the letter is the author of a medico-magical treatise. As regards Ammianus' place of birth, Bowersock suggests Alexandria as the best possibility.[3] Barnes supports the main outlines of Fornara's thesis: both the tone and content of the letter reveal a youth who had just begun his career in Rome.[4] Barnes agrees with Matthews' thesis that Ammianus spoke Syriac,[5] concluding that the historian came from Syria or Phoenicia, perhaps from the city of Tyre or Sidon.

In his defence of Antioch as Ammianus' place of birth, Matthews bases much of his argumentation on passages of the *RG* that indicate that Ammianus had strong connections with the Syrian region and, particularly, Antioch. He makes a good case showing that Ammianus knew Syriac. In describing a settlement not far from Amida, Ammianus says that its name, Meiacarire, meant "place of cool waters" (18.6.6). He does not consider necessary to explain the reader that the term was Syriac. If the historian had not known Syriac, Matthrews argues, we would have expected some sort of explanation

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[1] *Epistulae* 1063 (ed. Foerster).
[2] Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus," 328-44.
[3] G. W. Bowersock, review of *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, by John Matthews, *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 244-50.
[4] Timothy D. Barnes, "Ammianus Marcellinus and His World," *Classical Philology* 88, no. 1 (1993): 55-70; *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 54-64.
[5] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 44, 55-57.

of how he learnt the meaning of this term.[6] Ammianus also shows an excellent knowledge of the topography of the region of Syria. After the fall of Amida in 359, Ammianus, accompanied by two other soldiers, was familiar enough with the desert to find his way back to Antioch: *squalentum peritia locorum* (19.8.5). Matthews also refers to specific examples that connect Ammianus with Antioch. Ammianus and Jovinianus, the satrap of Corduene, became friends when the latter was hostage in Syria, probably at Antioch (16.6.20-21).[7] Ursicinus, who possibly played a decisive role in Ammianus' enrolment with the rank of *protector domesticus*, possessed a house in Antioch (18.4.3). Antioch is the place where Ammianus returned after the fall of Amida in 359 (19.8.12). He probably remained there following the dismissal of Ursicinus. Once more, after Julian's defeat against the Persians in 363, Ammiànus returned to Antioch (25.10.1), whereas the army led by Jovian continued towards Constantinople. In 371, he was at Antioch again, where he witnessed the trials for magic arts and conspiracy against Valens. Ammianus tells the reader that he himself experienced a time of darkness and confusion during these trials (29.1.24; 2.4). In the context of these terrible interrogations, the historian refers to the danger and humiliation suffered by many noble men such as *noster Hypatius*. Matthews argues that the context is indeed Antiochene and the historian is alluding to their common background.[8] To Matthews' references to the *RG*, Sabbah adds few instances, which suggest that Ammianus had an inside knowledge of the city of Antioch. He echoes a local story about how the Caesar Gallus ventured at night around the inns and street corners of the city asking in Greek what they thought of the Caesar

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[6] Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 69. Barnes accepts Matthews' argumentation. See *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 56. Other Syriac toponyms in the *RG* are Naarmalcha (24.2.7) and Zaitha (23.5.7).
[7] For Ammianus' knowledge of the geography of Mesopotamia, see 18.8.7-13; 19.8.5-12.; Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, 44, 55-57.
[8] Matthews, "The Origin of Ammianus," 255-57.

(14.1.9). As regards the destruction of the temple of Daphne, the historian inserts a local rumour (*rumore levissimo*) containing precise details about the real cause of the fire: the philosopher Asclepiades inadvertently started the fire, not the Christians as the official version had claimed (22.13.2-3). Furthermore, Ammianus retells an old story that contains an unmistakable local flavour. In the time of the emperor Gallienus, the Persians often raided Syria. On one occasion, the people of Antioch were attending a theatre performance when the wife in the mime suddenly broke the spectators' silence by exclaiming: "Is it a dream, or are the Persians here?" The spectators scattered in all directions in an attempt to escape the rain of Persian arrows. The city was sacked and many died. Mareades, an Atiochene who had betrayed the city to the Persians, was burned at the stake (23.5.2-3). Although the story of Mareades' treachery is recorded in other sources, the colourful details about the shock of the people in the theatre and the execution of Mareades are only told by two other Antiochene sources: Libanius and John Malalas.[9]

On balance, the view that Ammianus was from Antioch seems to some scholars the most likely possibility. In fact, Rosen accepts Matthews' thesis in his article on Ammianus included in *Der neue Pauly,* reflecting the old *communis opinio* on this topic.[10]

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[9] Sabbah, "Ammien Marcellin, Libanius, Antioch, " 97-107.
[10] Klaus Rosen, "Ammianus Marcellinus," in *Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike*, ed. Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider and August Friedrich von Pauly (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1996-)

Appendix 2

Citations from Homer, Cicero, and Vergil.

There are numerous examples in which the name of Homer is explicitly cited as a source of a particular statement or comment. Ammianus quotes a verse from the *Iliad* as a metaphor of the future of Caesar Julian (15.8.17): Homer *Iliad* 5.83. In his brief digression on the causes and varieties of plagues, the historian mentions that the animals that look downwards are the first to die (19.4.6), a statement directly inspired by a Homeric verse: Homer *Iliad* 5.83. The Homeric poems are again echoed to justify the existence of the so-called guardian spirits (21.14.5). It was not the gods that spoke and aided brave men, but guardian spirits: Homer *Iliad* 1.503ff. Ammianus reports the ways in which people of Antioch made fun of Julian's physical appearance, calling him a ape-like dwarf who took mighty strides as if he were the brother of Otus and Ephialtes, whose enormous height Homer describes in the *Odyssey* (22.14.3): Homer *Odyssey* 11.307 ff. In his digression on the river Nile, Ammianus states that Homer called it "Aegyptus" (22.15.3): Homer *Odyssey* 4.477. The origin of the legend of Proteus, who lived with his herd of seals in the island of Pharos, is attributed to Homer (22.16.10): Homer *Odyssey* 4. 400 ff. Homer is cited as the authority to explain that names of places are often derived from the names of famous rivers. The river Adiabas provided the name of Adiabena, an area located between the rivers Ona and Tigris in the region of Assyria (23.6.21): Homer *Odyssey* 4.477 ff. Within the ethnographical digression of the different regions of the Persian Empire, Ammianus refers to the Abii (23.6.53) and the Galactophagi (23.6.62). He states that, according to Homer, Jupiter looks at the Abii with favour from Mount Ida. Homer describes both the Abii and the Galactophagi as righteous men in a verse

Ammianus cites in Greek: Homer *Iliad* 13.6. When describing the topography of Thrace, Ammianus corrects Homer, who says that the North and West winds come from this region (27.4.3): Homer *Iliad* 9.5. As an illustration of how the writing of history should avoid repetition, Ammianus recalls the episode when Ulysses among the Phaeacians shrinks from repeating the details of his adventures (27.8.4): Homer *Odyssey* 12.452ff. The historian echoes an episode from the *Iliad* in order to illustrate the vulnerability of people's minds at night (28.1.54). Homer's Ajax wished to die by daylight to escape from the suffering of dread at night: Homer *Iliad* 17.645ff. Finally, as Ammianus mentions the mountain Mimas as rising above the city of Erythrae, he cites Homer as an authority (31.14.8). In this case, however, Homer is actually referring to a mountain located on the island of Psyra, near Chios: Homer *Odyssey* 3.172.

For a comprehensive list of the citations of Cicero, see E. E. L. Owens, "Phraseological Parallels and Borrowings in Ammianus Marcellinus from Earlier Latin Authors" (Ph.D. diss., London, Birkbeck College, 1958), 48-149. For a discussion on more recent scholarly work on this topic, see Rosen *Ammianus Marcellinus*, 92. The passages that can be confidently identified in Cicero's works are as follows: The wilderness of the Isaurians (14.2.2) is illustrated with the following passage quoted literally: Cicero *Pro Cluentio* 25.67. The drinking habits of the Gauls (15.12.4) are described in a fragment only recorded in the *RG*: Cicero *Pro Fonteio* 4.9. Concerning the good qualities of Julian (16.1.5), the historian inserts a quote: Cicero *Orator ad Brutum* 43.147. A verbatim citation is also employed to explain how men often misinterpret the correct prophecies sent by the gods: Cicero *De natura deorum* 2.4.12. A quasi-verbatim reference is used to criticize those philosophers who seek honour and fame (22.7.3-4):

Cicero *Pro Archia* 11.26. (26.9.11). The gloomy nature of the usurper Procopius is compared with that of Crassus, who laughed only once according to Cicero (26.9.11): Cicero *De finibus* 5.30.92. (27.4.8). When describing the location of Stragira in Thrace, Ammianus tells us that this city was known as the birthplace of Aristotle, who, states Cicero, honoured the city with his speech (27.4.8): Cicero *Academicae quaestiones* 2.38.119. The moral integrity of Praetextatus is similar to that of Brutus, who was known for doing nothing to gain favour (27.9.10): Cicero *Orator ad Brutum* 10.34. (27.11.4). That Probus could blindly defend clients he knew to be guilty is criticized through a verbatim quotation (27.11.4): Cicero *Orationes Philippicae* 2.12.29. Following a comment of how a severe judge can also be merciful, he uses a verbatim quote (28.1.40): Cicero *Epistulae ad Quintum fratrem* 1.1.13.39. In the context of the second satirical digression against the Roman aristocracy, the historian criticizes those who exclusively seek their own profit, recalling a proverbial sentence (28.4.26): Cicero *De amicitia* 21.79. When commenting on how a commander or ruler should sometimes apply severity instead of mercy, he again borrows from Cicero (29.5.24): Cicero *Epistulae ad Brutum* 1.2.5. In his digression on lawyers, advocates, and the administration of justice in general, Ammianus mentions how eloquence could also corrupt judges (30.4.10): Cicero *De republica* 5.11. When discussing the meaning of an oracle, composed by three verses from the *Odyssey*, the historian uses the authority of Homer and Cicero for the location of Mt. Mimas (31.14.8): Cicero *Epistulae ad Atticum* 16.13a.2.

In a reference to Cornelius Gallus' dubious financial activities as Prefect of Egypt, Ammianus mentions that Gallus was also the poet celebrated by Vergil in the last eclogue (17.4.5): Vergil *Eclogues* 10. The historian employs a nearly verbatim quotation

from the *Aeneid* to explain how the digression on the Gauls will require a large amount of material (15.9.1): Vergil Aeneid 7.44 ff. Craugasius of Nisibis, who fled to the Persians following the fall of Amida, is depicted as holding the second place after Antoninus among the Persians. Inspired by a line from the *Aeneid*, the historian emphasizes the great difference between the talented Antoninus and Craugasius, who was simpler by nature. (19.9.7): Vergil *Aeneid* 5.320.To illustrate the great amount of Goths admitted in the Roman army, Ammianus uses an almost verbatim citation (31.4.6): Vergil *Georgics* 2.106 ff.

Appendix 3

The Epilogue

The content of the epilogue has generated an abundance of scholarly research. There are two chief points for discussion. First, the chronological limits of the *Res Gestae* have raised an endless speculation about the nature of the lost books and the extent of Ammianus' own debt to Tacitus. Second, what are the actual connotations of the words *miles* and *Graecus*?[1] Some scholars argue that the historian is boasting about his cultural background as well as stressing his role as an eyewitness. This is the view lately defended by Barnes.[2] Conversely, the epilogue could be the apology of a mere soldier writing in a foreign language. I firmly believe that the epilogue is a rhetorical formula of humility. Even if we accept W. Hamilton's translation of *ad maiores stylos* as "in the grand style", instead of making a comparison with the historian's writing, as J. C. Rolfe does, the rest of the epilogue clearly emphasizes Ammianus' modesty: he composed his history "to the measure of my ability", and encouraged "abler men" to continue his work. In a strict grammatical sense, the expression "to the best of my ability" does not refer to the historian's claims to avoid misrepresenting the truth, as Barnes argues. In addition, if Ammianus were genuinely proud of his Hellenic background, why did he not try to impress his Roman audience with his knowledge of Greek authors? Why are Ammianus' literary borrowings mainly from Roman authors? And, why does the historian make an effort to romanize his hero Julian? Barnes is certainly right in arguing that the formula of

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[1] For the scholarly debate on Ammianus' characterization as a former soldier and a Greek, see G. Calboli, "Ammian und die Geschichsschreibung seiner Zeit," in *Festschrift für Robert Muth*, ed. P. Händel and L. Meid, 33-53 (Insbruck: Amoe, 1983).
[2] Barnes, Ammianus Marcelinus, 65-78.

false modesty belongs to the preface.[3] Thus, in the introduction of a speech, the orator must gain the benevolence of the listener by adopting an attitude of humility. Cicero confirms this: *prece et obsecratione humili ac supplici utemur.*[4] In the preface to the *Agricola* Tacitus claims that his work is written *incondita ac rudi voce.*[5] However, Ammianus had already used this literary convention after his excursus on Gaul. After the digression Ammianus resumes the narrative, saying that he will need the full resources of his modest talent for a narrative that, he adds, will resemble the panegyrical style (16.1.2-3). The content of the epilogue, moreover, is partly similar to that of a preface. Perhaps, the historian felt obliged to insert this brief clarification of content and methodology since he added new books (26-31) to his initial historical plan that had ended with Jovian's death.

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[3] Ibid., 65

[4] *De Invent.* 1, 16, 22.

[5] *Agricola* 3. Cf. Ernst Robert Curtius, *Literatura europea y Edad Media latina*, trans. M. F. Alatorre and A. Alatorre (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1984), 127-31.

Appendix 4

The Huns

In his monographs on the Huns, Thompson defends the overall truthfulness of Ammianus' excursus.[1] In fact, argues Thompson, these digressions provide us with vital information about the Huns' economy and social structure. From Ammianus' account of the Huns' reliance on their flocks for their food supply, *et semicruda cuiusvis pectoris carne vescantur* (31.2.3), Thompson concludes that they were at what anthropologists define as a "lower stage of pastoralism." More specifically, it means that the Huns did not have craft-working skills, relying, therefore, on the productive abilities of other people for luxury goods, including weapons.[2] Thompson also argues that Ammianus accurately describes their social structure. The relevant passage is: "They are subject to no royal restraint, but they are content with the disorderly government of their important men, and led by them they force their way through every obstacle" (31.2.7). According to Thompson, the historian's account clearly implies that Hunnic society was egalitarian in the second half of the fourth century: they did not have kings, not even an aristocracy, but chose temporary leaders in times of war.[3]

In *The World of the Huns,* J. O. Maenchen-Helfen challenges Thompson's reliance on Ammianus as a historical source. Maenchen-Helfen explains that Ammianus' digression is a literary commonplace of traditional ethnographic descriptions of nomadic people. Particularly, he argues that the historian applied to the Huns the primitive features

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[1] E. M. Thompson, *A History of Attila and the Huns.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1948; *The* Huns, revised by Peter Heather (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996). See also *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcelinus,* 6-8. Matthews also argues that the digression is relevant to reconstruct the early contacts of the Huns with the Romans. See *The Roman Empire of Ammianus,* 332-42, 353-55.
[2] Thompson, *The Huns,* 47.
[3] Ibid., 48 ff.

of the Scythians. In Graeco-Roman literature, these people were traditionally described as a prototype of barbarians, and Stoic philosophers idealized them as "noble savages." Ammianus, argues Maenchen-Helfen, employed this literary imaginary to highlight the "beastliness" of the Huns.[4] Overall, Maenchen-Helfen convincingly shows how a close examination of the archaeological and literary sources reveals a considerable level of complexity in the Huns' economy and social structure. For instance, Jordanes refers to a king of the Huns, Balamber, as the mastermind of the attacks upon the Goths in c. 370, contradicting Ammianus' account.[5]

W. Richter offers a somehow more balanced argumentation, suggesting that Ammianus' portrayal is made up of commonplaces used for the description of barbarians, except for two observations: the Huns sit side-ways on the horse, and they scar children's cheeks at birth, a practice that would explain why the men are beardless (31.2.2).[6] In my view, C. King gives the most comprehensive examination.[7] He systematically describes Ammianus' errors and misconceptions, concluding that the historian relied on borrowed visual information that he was unable to interpret correctly. King bases much of his argument on two mistakes the historian makes: first, Priscus of Panium, who accompanied the eastern Roman ambassador Maximinus on an embassy to Attila in 449 and was, therefore, in a better position to enquire about the customs of the Huns, contradicts the historian's explanation of their "beardlessness", saying that the Huns

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[4] J. Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns: Studies in Their History and Culture*, ed. Max Knight (Berkeley: University of California Press), 169-200. See also Brent D. Shaw, "Eaters of Flesh, Drinkers of Milk: The Ancient Mediterranean Ideology of the Pastoral Nomad," *Ancient Society* 13-14 (1982-83): 5-31.
[5] Ibid., 12.
[6] W. Richter, "Die Darstellung der Hunnen bei Ammianus Marcellinus (31.2.1-11)," *Historia* 23 (1974): 343-77.
[7] C. King, "The Veracity of Ammianus' Description of the Huns," *American Journal of Ancient History* 12 (1987): 77-95.

scarred their faces at funerals as an act of mourning.[8] Second, Ammianus' claim that they ate half-raw meat previously kept under their thighs when riding horses stems from his misunderstanding of the use of meat as a saddle pad, a practice known from other Central Asian peoples.

To summarize: a close analysis of Ammianus' passage on the Huns and, particularly, a comparison of this excursus with other sources, show that this digression is not based on historical facts but on a long literary tradition that reflects the cultural prejudices against people viewed as living beyond the margins of the empire both geographically and culturally.

[8] 24.1. R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus* (Liverpool: F. Cairns, 1981), 317.

Appendix 5

Geography and the Roman Army

Traditionally, numerous scholars have assumed that, considering the Romans' high development in administrative tasks, they must have employed maps to scale. The interpretation of the evidence supporting this view, both literary and archaeological, is strongly determined by the assumption that two-dimensional maps must have manifested the Romans' idea of geography, excluding other ways to organize space. [1]

Conversely, P. Janni has convincingly challenged the idea that the Romans used maps in the same way as we do. After an exhaustive analysis of all the Greek and Latin passages mentioning maps, Janni concludes that there is no evidence of the practical application of cartography. Instead, he argues, the Romans organized the environment in terms of what he calls a *spazio odologico*, a linear or one-dimensional conception of space. The itinerary, argues Janni, would be the practical natural manifestation of this way of thinking.[2] Recent research on military strategy has confirmed the notion that the

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[1] See R. K. Sherk, "Roman and Military Maps," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen* 2, no. 1 (1974): 534-62. For a comprehensive presentation of what we can call the traditional thesis, applied to both Greek and Roman cartography, see O. A. W. Dilke, and M. Dilke, "Perception of the Roman World," in *Progress in Geography* 9 (1976): 39-72; O. A. W. Dilke, *Greek and Roman Maps* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985); "The Culmination of Greek Cartography in Ptolemy," 177-200; "Maps in the Service of the State: Roman Cartography to the End of the Augustan Era," 201-11; "Roman Large-Scale Mapping in the Early Empire," 212-33; "Itineraries and Geographical Maps in the Early and Late Roman Empire," 234-57; "Cartography in the Byzantine Empire," 258-75, in *The History of Cartography*, ed. J. B. Harley and David Woodward, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). A summary of the traditional view can be read in the third edition of C. Moreland and D. Bannister, *Antique Maps* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1989). Both R. C. French and C. Nicolet support Dilke's view. French justifies the scarcity of map evidence by the difficulties involved in the scribal transmission of images. Although Nicolet systematically lists the geographical misconceptions in the early Empire, he concludes that the scientific principles of ancient cartography were similar to our own, and restricted by a primitive technology. See R. K. French, *Ancient Natural History: Histories of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1994), 114-15. Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics in the Early Roman Empire*, trans. H. Lecrerc (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Universiy of Michigan Press, 1991): 57-84.

[2] "non esiste *una sola* testimonianza sicura di uso pratico delle carte geografiche; non c'e *un solo* autore antico che mostri sicuramente la carta nelle mani di un comandante militare, di un navigatori o di un viaggiatore. (...) Tutti i luogui dove si parla senza dubio di carta non implicano neppure da lontano un loro

Roman officers were unable to produce a topographical description in a global scale: they had to rely on accounts from people that had been in a particular region.[3] Additionally, other scholars have developed Janni's main thesis, particularly the idea of "conceptual geography" or "mental maps," concluding that there is no connection between the theoretical knowledge of geography that was applied to the drawing of global maps, which describe the inhabited world (*oikoumene* or *orbis terrarum*), and the way the ancients actually perceived their immediate environment, a perception shaped by oral tradition and written itineraries.[4]

The thesis that Roman cartography was articulated in the form of a road itinerary, sometimes with added illustrations, seems to find an echo in the literary sources themselves.[5] Polybius' advice about how to acquire topographical knowledge perfectly matches the nature of mental maps: they are derived from personal memory and oral

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impiego pratico; per contro, tutte le testimonianze di uso pratico di documenti geographici si riferiscono a itinerari o peripli..." P. Janni, *La mappa e il periplo: Cartographia antica e spazio odologico* (Rome: Bretschneider, 1984), 20. Janni is greatly indebted to some important works published in the seventies on the mental construction of space, which distinguish three fundamental ways of organizing the surroundings: by landmarks, by routes, and by surveys. See R. G. Downs and D. Stea, *Image and Environment: Cognitive Mapping and Spatial Behaviour* (Chicago: Aldine, 1973); A. H. Robinson and B. B. Petchenik, *The Nature of Maps: Essays toward Understanding Maps and Mapping* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

[3] F. Millar, "Emperors, Frontiers and Foreign Relations, 31 BC to AD 378," *Britannia* 13 (1982): 1-25; Benjamin Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990); "Eusebius and the Geography of the Roman Provinces," in *The Roman Army in the East*, ed. D. L. Kennedy and David Braund (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1996), 166. See also A. C. Bertrand. "Stumbling Through Gaul: Maps, Intelligence, and Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*," *The Ancient History Bulletin* 11, no. 4 (1997): 107-22; Mattern. *Rome and the Enemy*, 24-80.

[4] T. Bekker-Nielsen, "*Terra Incognita:* The Subjective Geography of the Roman Empire," in *Studies in Ancient History and Numismatics Presented to Rudi Thomsen*, ed. Aksel Damsgaard-Madsen, Erik Christiansen, and Erik Hallager, 148-61 (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1988); Richard J. A. Talbert, review of *Greek and Roman Maps*, by O. A. W. Dilke, *Journal of Roman Studies* 77 (1987): 210-12; review of *The History of Cartography*, by J. B. Harley and David Woodward, *American Historical Review* 94 (1989): 407-8; "Rome's Empire and Beyond: The Spatial Aspect," *Cahiers de Études Anciennes* 26 (1990): 215-23. See the comprehensive study by Brodersen, *Terra Cognita*. To examine how this perspective is applied to the *RG* see Sundwall, "Ammianus Geographicus," 619-43; Mary Lionel, *Les représentations de l'espace chez Ammien Marcellin* (Ph.D. diss., Paris-Sorbonne, 1995).

[5] See Brodersen. "The Presentation of Geographical Knowledge," 7-21.

information.[6] In their geographical digressions, ancient writers emphasize routes, especially rivers and roads, distances between points, and the relative location of points. This is a linear conception of space, and representative of the type of information to be found in ancient itineraries.[7]

Vegetius' *De Re Militare*, a military manual written at the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century, offers clear evidence about types of itineraries and their usefulness for military campaigns:

> First, he should have itineraries of all the regions in which war is being waged written out in the fullest detail, so that he may learn the distances between places by the number of miles and the quality of the roads, and examine short-cuts, by-ways, mountains and rivers, accurately described. Indeed, the more conscientious generals reportedly had itineraries of the provinces in which the emergency occurred not just annotated (*adnotata*) but illustrated as well (*picta*), so that they could choose their route when setting out by the visual aspect as well as by mental calculation[8]

Itineraries could also be put in written form like the *Antonine Itinerary*. This work contains descriptions of sea and land routes covering most of the provinces of the empire. Although the original itinerary started from the travels of Caracalla, the extant work was composed some time in the fourth century, since there is Tetrarchic material in it. The method of this itinerary is to enumerate the starting and finishing points of each journey and the distance in Roman miles. Then the individual stages of the journey were listed, with the distance for each. The illustrated itinerary described by Vegetius clearly resembles the Peutinger Table, a work composed in the fourth century but based on an

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[6] Polybius 9.14.4 (ed. and trans. Paton).
[7] For a comprehensive discussion of the origin and nature of Roman manuscript itineraries, particularly the Antonine Itinerary and the Peutinger table, see Salway, "Travel, *Itineraria* and *Tabellaria*."
[8] *Epitoma rei militaris* 3.6 (trans. Milner).

earlier itinerary of the late first century. The Peutinger Table is not a military itinerary per se, but, as Vegetius' description suggests, it could be used for military purposes. It shows main roads, a total of 70,000 Roman miles, stopping places, spas, distances between stages, and the more relevant features of the landscape, such as large rivers, mountains and forests. It would be certainly misleading to call this work a road map, as Dilke does.[9] The Peutinger Table is not a topographical map drawn according to scale, but a schematic representation of routes. The author was indeed pragmatic when he depicted this work on a long (6.75 meters) and narrow (34 centimeters) parchment roll. This fact contributed to its lack of proportions: east-west distances are represented to a much larger scale than north-south distances.

To summarize: the research of the last three decades has successfully showed that the Romans did not use a two-dimensional cartography in their military and exploratory campaigns. Instead, they strongly relied on a linear conception of space as materialized in the road itinerary. In the analysis of both literary and archaeological sources, previous scholarship had erroneously assumed that the Romans must have applied a tradition of geographical knowledge that went back to the Hellenistic period and culminated in the treatise of Ptolemy.

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[9] Harley and Woodward, *History of Cartography*, vol. 1, 238, n. 25.